

BIG BANG. Vendors sell firecrackers on Quezon Avenue in Legazpi City to greet the New Year.

NINO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Benazir Bhutto dies in suicide bombing

Court says Palparan knew of abductions

By Lella B. Salaverria

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS DIRECTLY linked retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan to the abduction of civilians suspected of being insurgents, saying that he at least knew about the arrest and detention by his men of the Manila brothers.

The court's second division said this showed Palparan's "command policy" of encouraging the arrest of civilians without due process and sufficient basis.

In the Dec. 26 decision penned by Justice Lucas Bersamin, the court also said other military personnel and members of the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) were involved in the abduction of farmers Raymond and Reynaldo Manalo in Bulacan and their detention for 18 months.

Reacting to the court ruling, Palparan yesterday said he neither encouraged the abduction of civilians nor detained the Manalo brothers. (See Palparan's side on Page A15.)

Palparan, who retired in September 2006, has been tagged a "butcher" by militant groups, which have accused him of involvement in the disappearance or killings of their officers and members.

But President Macapagal-Arroyo
COURT SAYS/ A15

BSP warns ATM users vs 'surfers'

By Doris C. Dumlaog

GETTING MONEY FROM AN AUTOMATED teller machine (ATM) can be a hassle, especially during this holiday season.

Beware particularly of "shoulder surfers" who lurk behind you.

It is also prudent to cup one hand over the keyboard while punching the buttons with the other.

These are some of the things to keep in mind for your own security in conducting business on the ATM, according to a recent advisory issued by the

BSP WARNS/ A5

Attacker shoots her, then blows self up

RAWALPINDI, PAKISTAN—PAKISTANI opposition leader Benazir Bhutto was assassinated on Thursday, apparently after being shot and then attacked by a suicide bomber as she left a campaign rally, aides said. Twenty others were also killed.

The death of the charismatic former prime minister threw the campaign for the Jan. 8 election into chaos and created fears of mass protests and an eruption of violence across the volatile South Asian nation.

"She has been martyred," said party official Rehman Malik.

The attacker struck just minutes after Bhutto addressed a rally of thousands of supporters in the garrison city of Rawalpindi.

She was shot in the neck and chest by the attacker, who then blew himself up, said Malik, Bhutto's security adviser.

The scene of the bombing was awash in blood.

An Associated Press reporter could see body parts and flesh scattered at the back gate of the Liaqat Bagh park where Bhutto had spoken. He counted about 20 bodies and could see many other wounded people.

Bhutto was rushed to the hospital and taken into emergency surgery.

"At 6:16 p.m. she expired," said Wasif Ali Khan, a member of Bhutto's party who was at Rawalpindi General Hospital.

Bhutto's supporters at the hospital exploded in anger, smashing the glass door at the main entrance of the emergency unit. Others burst into tears. One man with a flag of the Pakistan People's Party tied around his head was beating his chest.

Some at the hospital began chanting, "Killer, killer,

BENAZIR/ A5

Bounty for killer of Lintuan now P1M

By Joselle dR. Badilla and Dennis Jay C. Santos
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—THE BOUNTY on the head of the killer of broadcaster Ferdie Lintuan was increased to P1 million yesterday after Rep. Prospero Nograles pledged an additional P500,000.

Earlier, Mayor Rodrigo Duterte offered P500,000 in an effort to speed up the investigation of the Dec. 24 murder of Lintuan.

Lintuan, 52, was shot by a man riding behind another on a motorcycle as he drove home from radio station dxGO.

Lintuan had discussed on his radio program alleged irregularities, including those that attended the construction of the newly opened People's Park here. He had claimed that the trees planted at the park were overpriced.

As the police were conducting

BOUNTY/ A15



BHUTTO waves to her supporters during a campaign rally in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, moments before she was assassinated on Thursday.

AP

Fired prisons chief claims innocence: Jalosjos fled

By Julie M. Aurelio and Christine O. Avendaño

THE AXED DIRECTOR OF THE Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) yesterday disclaimed responsibility for Romeo Jalosjos' unhampered departure from the national penitentiary and subsequent flight to Zamboanga

del Norte on Dec. 22.

In a phone interview, Ricardo Daput claimed that the convicted child rapist and ex-lawmaker had actually escaped: "Tumakas siya nun. It was not that difficult for him because he was already a living-out prisoner."

Daput pointed out that he had prevented Jalosjos from leaving the New

Bilibid Prisons (NBP) in Muntinlupa City earlier on the basis of a purported release order.

"Pinigilan natin yan nang Dec. 16. Wala pa talaga yung release order niya," he said.

Asked to confirm the discharge certificate that Jalosjos had shown reporters, he said: "That is not valid. It is

only a xeroxed copy, and the original is still with the BuCor administration [office]."

He said the actual discharge certificate had yet to be issued because he was just about to sign it.

In an interview with the ABS-CBN News Channel, Daput said the office of

FIRE/ A4

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL GAP

Phone equipment worth \$200M rusting in warehouses

(Second of three parts)

MORE THAN \$200 MILLION WORTH OF equipment is rusting in two warehouses in Metro Manila in the wake of the disastrous Telepono sa Barangay (TSB) project designed to link remote villages with the rest of the country, the INQUIRER has learned.

The government pays the rent for the warehouses, as well as the amortization for loans incurred for the project under the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC).

Sen. Mar Roxas says that in the 2008 national budget, the outlay for foreign loan repayment for the TSB project is P250 million.

Under a martial law decree that remains current to this day, deals with overseas financiers hammered out by the executive branch are not



TEAM Report
Fernando del Mundo
Chief



A FARMER in Salug, Zamboanga del Norte, poses in front of a bank of telephones for the multibillion-peso Telepono sa Barangay project. Photo taken on Oct. 1.

Salug folk finally able to say hello to Graham Bell

By Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

SALUG, ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE—This town of about 30,000 people at the edge of the Sulu Sea never got acquainted with Alexander Graham Bell's creation even though it got 92 units of equipment under the government's Telepono sa Barangay project seven years ago.

None of the units worked, for some mysterious reason.

Emilia Fausto, 17, says she was introduced to the contraption only in

SALUG FOLK/ A14



Nene slams ethnic slur on Visayans in Juday movie

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A joke, but Visayans are not laughing.

A Mindanao senator yesterday denounced a scene in the Judy Ann Santos starrer "Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo" that suggests Filipinos who speak the Visayan dialect are second-class citizens to the Tagalog.

NENE SLAMS/ A15

Text us your feedback: Inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Luzon and Visayas will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. Mindanao will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Batangas	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Albay	Cloudy with Rains
Davao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laos	Cloudy with Rains	Palawan	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tegaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Agusan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Surigao	Partly Cloudy

COMPILED BY: SCHATZ GUIONA, FOX RESEARCH/12/27/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

Second FRONT PAGE

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EZ2

SIX DIGIT

15 27 4 4 4 8 5 1

(In exact order)

Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening

4 3 2 5 5 3

SUPERLOTTO 6/49

15 16 19 21 33 36

P42,987,166.20

Lim snubs AFP's 'Pen' probe

Lawyer says it will prejudice rebellion case

By Nikko Dizon

DETAINED ARMY BRIG. GEN. Danilo Lim yesterday refused to participate in a military inquiry into the Peninsula Manila take over, saying it would prejudice his rebellion case pending before a Makati City court.

Speaking through his lawyer, Vicente Verdadero, Lim also questioned his transfer to a detention cell at the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) in Camp Aguinaldo in violation of a court order transferring him to the Army custodial center in Camp Capinpin, Tanay, Rizal.

"We did not participate in the Provost Marshal's investigation because the subject matter of the investigation is also the subject matter of the criminal case for rebellion in the Makati court... that would unduly prejudice (him)," Verdadero told reporters.

Lim, Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and 16 other officers and soldiers are set to be arraigned on



LIM

Jan. 15 in connection with the Manila Pen siege on Nov. 29 where they renewed their call for the ouster of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Verdadero said that "as far as Gen. Lim is concerned, the investigation of the Provost Marshal is terminated."

AFP Provost Marshal, Col. Arthur Abadilla, said Lim had the right not to participate in the military investigation that will determine if the Army general and other officers

and soldiers violated the Articles of War.

However, Abadilla said Lim's non-cooperation would not prevent the Armed Forces from pursuing a case against him.

Wearing civilian clothes and under heavy guard, Lim was brought to the Provost Marshal's Office in Camp Aguinaldo at around 9:30 a.m.

He had spent almost a month at the PNP jail in Camp Crame and one night in Camp Capinpin, where he was detained before the Manila Pen affair together with Marine officers suspected of plotting a coup d'etat in February 2006.

Following the inquiry, Lim was brought to the high-security Isafp compound on orders of AFP chief of staff, Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr.

Abadilla said Lim's detention at the Isafp is for "expediency and (his) security."

Verdadero said he would file the proper motion in court, questioning the transfer of Lim to Isafp.

"We have to uphold the order of the court. It is very clear, under further orders of the court, that he cannot be moved from Tanay," Verdadero said.

Truckloads of soldiers sound alarm for cops

By Nikko Dizon

FEARS OF ANOTHER INCIDENT like the one that rocked the Peninsula Manila hotel last month were apparently on the minds of police in Cavite as they stopped more than 100 Marines and 27 other policemen on the highway in Bacoor town yesterday, suspecting their trip to Metro Manila had not been authorized by the military command.

The Marines and cops were on seven military trucks when Bacoor police stopped them at around 9:50 a.m., Lt. Col. Ariel Caculitan, Philippine Navy spokesperson, said.

Caculitan said the police allowed the troops to proceed after verifying that their

movement had been cleared by the Joint Operation Center at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

Caculitan said the group's travel to Marine headquarters in Taguig City had been coordinated with the Philippine National Police at the regional level but, for some reason, the communication failed to reach the PNP provincial office.

Students of the Marine Basic Airborne Course, the soldiers and policemen had completed their ground training in Ternate, Cavite, and were headed to Marine headquarters to prepare for their airborne jumps in Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija, Caculitan said.

Writ of amparo out for Jonas

By TJ Burgonio

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS ISSUED A writ of amparo in the case of missing activist Jonas Burgos, a move that is seen as facilitating the seven-month-long search for the young activist in the military camps.

The appellate court granted the writ last Thursday, a day after Edith Burgos filed a petition for amparo to get the military to account for her son's disappearance, the Burgoses' lawyer said.

Interviewed just before a post-Christmas get-together with families of other desaparecidos at the Bantayog ng mga Bayani in Quezon City yesterday, Edith said she was very happy about the grant of the writ.

"It will probably hasten things. That's the source of our relief," she said.

The young Burgos, 37, a son of the late press freedom fighter Jose "Joe" Burgos Jr., has been missing for seven months today.

The appellate court ordered the respondents, led by Armed Forces Chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, to file a return, or an official report in response to the writ in five days, said lawyer Ricardo Fernandez.

The other respondents are Army chief Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano, Philippine National Police Director Avelino Razon, and Commission on Human Rights Chair Purificacion Quisumbing.

The court has set a hearing on the case for Jan. 7 to be presided over by Justice Remedios Hermendo of the 7th Division.

'Terrorist' sheik freed

CAIRO—POLICE IN THE PHILIPPINES HAVE freed an Egyptian envoy of Sunni Islam's highest seat of learning held for allegedly plotting a Christmas bomb attack, the institution's grand imam said on Thursday.

Al-Azhar's Sheikh Mohammed Sayyid Tantawi told Egypt's official MENA news agency that Sheikh Mohammed al-Sayyid Ahmed Mussa had been freed into the care of the Egyptian embassy "until all release procedures are completed."

There was no immediate confirmation from the Philippines.

Mussa, identified by Philippine police as Mohamad Sayed, was arrested on Dec. 18 during a raid on a flat in the Majad Islamic School in Cotabato City.

An explosive device fashioned from a 60-millimeter mortar round and ball bearings attached to a timing device were recovered from his room.

Police said the Egyptian was captured after surveillance and that intelligence reports suggested he planned to detonate the bomb at an undisclosed location in the city on Christmas Day.

Among the items they said were recovered from his room was a booklet on the organization of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a rebel group that has been fighting to set up an Islamic state in the southern Philippines.

AFP

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3353 Series of 2007.

Feast of the Innocents still relevant today, says Church man

By Beverly T. Natividad

CELEBRATED BY THE CATHOLIC Church on Dec. 28, the Feast of the Holy Innocents commemorates the massacre of babies during Herod's reign as king of Judea.

According to the gospel of Matthew, Herod, feeling threatened by the baby the Magi called "the King of the Jews," ordered all male children in Bethlehem up to two years of age killed in the hope the Christ Child would also be slain.

The Church venerates these children as martyrs, since they "died not only for Christ but in his stead." The Latin

Church instituted the feast sometime in the 4th or 5th century.

Known locally as Niños Inocentes, the feast in today's context is an occasion to remember those innocently suffering in justice, poverty and abuse by those in power, according to Rev. Fr. Ariston L. Sison Jr., director for Media and Social Communication of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Cubao (Quezon City).

In an interview, Sison said the children ordered slaughtered by Herod were sacrificed as "innocent victims" of his lust for power.

"They represent people who innocently suffer for somebody else, for

truth and for justice," he said.

In the present world, stained by selfishness and self-interest, many people are also called to rise to the occasion and share in the sufferings of Christ, he said.

"Christ did not suffer only for Himself but for all of us. He teaches us that His suffering was not useless but that it could save others, and that through it we are able to help others," Sison said.

He said the 55 Higaonon farmers from Sumilao, Bukidnon, who recently marched 1,700 kilometers on Malacafang to ask President

Macapagal-Arroyo to give them back their land, had shown how it is to suffer for a greater cause.

Their act, Sison said, could help others similarly situated.

Sison said in the Church calendar, the day is part of an "octave" when the

Church celebrates different feasts in the eight days following Christmas to commemorate, as well as try to understand, the mystery of Jesus' birth.

"It is as if one day is not enough to understand the mystery of Christ's birth," Sison said. *With Inquirer Research*

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		Presyo sa palengke sa Metro Manila.	

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Fired prisons chief claims innocence

From page A1

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita had known about Jalosjos' Dec. 16 release date as early as June 12.

He said two of his staff members talked to Edwin Enrile, a lawyer at Ermita's office, about the completion of Jalosjos' sentence.

Dapat quoted Enrile as telling him and

his staffers: "Wala na tayong magagawa kung yun ang computation ng bureau. Basta huwag lang tumabas sa media (We can't do anything about it if that's the bureau's computation. Just don't leak it to the media)."

Malacañang was quick to deny that it had ordered Jalosjos' release. Anthony Golez, deputy spokesperson of President

Macapagal-Arroyo, said he and other Palace officials were at a loss as to why Dapat was "fabricating stories."

'Sacrificial lamb'

On Wednesday, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez announced that Ms Arroyo had appointed Oscar Calderon, a former chief of the Philippine National Police, to replace Dapat as BuCor director.

Asked by the INQUIRER if he was the "sacrificial lamb" in the case, Dapat said: "Lahat ginawa ko, pero tumakas siya (I did everything but Jalosjos escaped). The perception is that I was relieved because of negligence. Wala akong kasalanan diyun (I am not at fault in this case)."

He said that on the night of Dec. 21, he even ordered some prison guards to check if Jalosjos was at his quarters near the NBP tennis court.

Dapat, whose term as BuCor director lasted only five months, apologized for not taking phone calls from reporters the past week. He explained that he was then still covered by a gag order issued by the Department of Justice.

Asked if he planned to work for the government again, he replied in the negative and said he would return to private life.

But Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz told the INQUIRER that Dapat's immediate subordinates should also be replaced "because it is not possible that the head will be chopped off while the arms and legs remain alive."

Cruz said replacing the other BuCor officials would be a chance for Ms Arroyo to clean up the NBP. He said it was an "open secret" that many prominent inmates enjoyed special privileges.

70 and above

Malacañang has repeatedly said Ms Arroyo's policy was that only prisoners aged 70 and above may be released. Jalosjos turns 70 in 2010.

A political ally of the President, Jalosjos was convicted in 1997 of the statutory rape

of an 11-year-old girl and sentenced to two life terms. In April, his sentence was commuted by Ms Arroyo to 16 years.

He walked out of the NBP on Dec. 16 by virtue of a discharge certificate signed by the NBP head, Supt. Juanito Leopando. Gonzalez subsequently ordered a review of the computation of the convict's remaining time in prison.

Jalosjos returned to the NBP, heeding the request of Dapat and Leopando to do so while the issue was being resolved.

But he insisted that he was now a free man, and threatened to sue the DOJ if it did not speedily resolve his case and if the government refused to "respect the release order."

On Dec. 22, Jalosjos flew to his home province of Zamboanga del Norte. He was rearrested early the next day, and is being held at the San Ramon Penal Colony, some 30 kilometers from Zamboanga City.

'Ministerial' duty

Dapat maintained yesterday that Jalosjos' sentence was to have expired on Dec. 16 based on then BuCor Director Vicente Vinarao's computation.

"My duty is purely ministerial," Dapat told the INQUIRER. "It was the past directors who granted Jalosjos the [living-out] status and the good-conduct time allowance, not I. So the expiration [of his sentence] was really on Dec. 16."

In earlier interviews, Vinarao said he had asked for written guidance from the DOJ regarding Jalosjos' completion of sentence, to no avail.

Dapat said it was not within the BuCor's jurisdiction to resolve the issue of Jalosjos' remaining time in prison, and that it was the DOJ that should resolve the question on the computation.

He also said that had Jalosjos' Dec. 16 release been official, the convict would have been set free the next day, a Monday.

"[The prisoner] would have had to undergo clearance first at the separation center, which does not have office hours on Sundays," Dapat said.

He added that like any other prisoner due for release, Jalosjos would have been made to undergo fingerprinting, documentation and identification, as well as a medical checkup.

'Never'

"The Palace never ordered the release of former Rep. Romeo Jalosjos," Golez said in a statement and in an interview with reporters.

This was echoed by Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Ser-

gio Apostol, who told reporters: "The Palace will not react this way if it was aware of the projected release [of Jalosjos] last Dec. 16."

Apostol said it was a case of sour grapes on Dapat's part: "When you are removed, you keep on blaming [other] people."

Golez issued the reminder that the DOJ was investigating the BuCor's action of releasing Jalosjos, and that the commutation order on the convict would "make him eligible for release at age 70."

Apostol said that according to the justice secretary, Jalosjos had not fully served his sentence, which was why he had to stay in prison.

And Dapat lost his job because he did not coordinate his release of Jalosjos with the DOJ, Apostol said.

This lack of coordination was the reason the DOJ and BuCor were now in "conflict" and "disagreement," he said, adding:

"The BuCor is saying they have their own rules, which were not approved by the DOJ."

Apostol said the DOJ was "just following the provisions of the Revised Penal Code" in rejecting the BuCor's release order on Jalosjos.

He acknowledged that the BuCor had the "right" to release prisoners. Nevertheless, it should coordinate with the DOJ, which has "administrative supervision" over it, he said.

Prisoner inventory

Calderon, the new BuCor director, said bureau officials were now preparing a list of prisoners aged 70 and above in order to facilitate their release.

"Our government has a policy of releasing elderly prisoners. Releasing them would help decongest our prisons as well," he said in a phone interview.

In October, Dapat said he had forwarded to the Bureau of Pardons and Parole the cases of 200 inmates eligible for release, as ordered by Malacañang.

Early this month, NBP chaplain Robert Olaguer broke the news that Jalosjos was set for release on Dec. 16, and Norberto Manero, convicted of killing an Italian priest, on Jan. 10.

Asked if Manero would be still freed in January, Calderon said: "I have not yet reviewed his papers. So we don't have a specific date. I have not yet received an order from the [DOJ] regarding that." With a report from Beverly T. Natividad

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Holy Innocents, Martyrs

1st Reading:

Gospel:

1 Jn 1:5-2:2
Matthew 2:13-18

After the wise men had left, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you for Herod will soon be looking for the child in order to kill him."

Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and left that night for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. In this way, what the Lord had said through the prophet was fulfilled: I called my son out of Egypt.

When Herod found out that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was furious. He gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its neighborhood who were two years old or under. This was done in line with what he had learned from the wise men about the time when the star appeared.

In this way, what the prophet Jeremiah had said was fulfilled: A cry is heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation: Rachel weeps for her children. She refuses to be comforted, for they are no more.

Commentary

Our God is light, truth, freedom, and holiness. We are born in God, dwell in God and so must walk in the light and make sure that the truth dwells in us. We are not to deceive ourselves and become liars, saying that we do not sin and that there is no darkness in us. We are to keep ourselves from sin, from missing the mark of being the beloved children of God: forgiveness, love unto death, faithfulness in the face of violence and persecution, the protection of the least of our brothers and sisters, the refusal to harm others, love of enemies. We are to walk with Jesus, in the Spirit, in the presence of the Father.

Joseph together with the child and his mother flee from Herod's viciousness/murder and slaughter and they become refugees. When Herod realizes that the astrologers did not return, he takes out his rage on those who are in the vicinity of where the child might be. This is the destruction of the innocent—those who are associated with the Child of God, those who are threatened by life, the victims of injustice, violence, poverty, human misery, and the injustice of those in power. We must make sure that we never find ourselves among those who do the killing and the slaughtering, in anyone's name, let alone, lying and saying it is done in the name of the God of life.

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Benazir Bhutto dies

From page A1
Musharraf," referring to President Pervez Musharraf, Bhutto's main political opponent. A few began stoning cars outside.

US condemns killing

"We repeatedly informed the government to provide her proper security and appropriate equipment including jammers, but they paid no heed to our requests," Malik said.

US officials said they were looking into reports of Bhutto's death.

"Certainly, we condemn the attack on this rally. It demonstrates that there are still those in Pakistan who want to subvert reconciliation and efforts to advance democracy," said US deputy state department spokesperson Tom Casey.

Return from exile

The United States has for months been encouraging Musharraf to reach some kind of political accommodation with the opposition, particularly Bhutto, who was seen as having a wide base of support.

Bhutto served twice as Pakistan's prime minister between 1988 and 1996. She had returned to Pakistan from an eight-year exile on Oct. 18.

Her homecoming parade in Karachi was also targeted by a suicide attacker, who killed more than 140 people. On that occasion, Bhutto narrowly escaped injury.

Gunshots ring out

Party supporter Chaudry Mohammed Nazir said two gunshots rang out when Bhutto's vehicle pulled onto the main street and then there was a huge blast next to her car.

The clothing of some of the victims was shredded and people put party flags over their bodies. Police caps and shoes littered the asphalt.

It was Bhutto's first public meeting in Rawalpindi since she came back to the country.

In recent weeks, suicide bombers have repeatedly targeted security forces in

Rawalpindi, a city near the capital where Musharraf stays and the Pakistan Army has its headquarters.

After Bhutto's death, her supporters at the hospital began chanting "Dog, Musharraf, dog."

Police said the suicide bomber fired shots at Bhutto as she was leaving the rally venue in a park before blowing himself up.

"The man first fired at Bhutto's vehicle. She ducked and then he blew himself up," said police officer Mohammad Shahid.

People cried and hugged each other outside the hospital where she died. Residents of Karachi, Bhutto's hometown, said they heard gunshots after news of Bhutto's death spread, apparently from her enraged supporters.

A Reuters witness at the scene of the attack said he heard two shots moments before the blast. Another Reuters witness saw bodies and a mutilated human head strewn on a road outside the park where she held her rally. *Reports from AP and Reuters*

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BSP warns ATM users

From page A1

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) in view of escalating complaints.

The following are "minimum" measures to ensure one's security in ATM and debit card transactions:

- Use ATMs that are familiar or that are in well-lit locations where one feels comfortable. If the machine is poorly lit or is in a hidden area, use another ATM.
- Have your card ready before approaching the ATM. Avoid having to go through a wallet or purse to find the card.
- Do not use ATMs that appear to have been tampered with or otherwise altered. Report such condition to the bank.
- Memorize your ATM personal identification number (PIN) and never disclose it to anyone. Do not keep those numbers or passwords in the wallet or purse. Never write them on the cards themselves. Avoid using easily available personal information like a birthday, nickname, mother's maiden name or consecutive numbers.
- Be mindful of "shoulder surfers" when using ATMs. Stand close to the ATM and shield the keypad with one hand when keying in the PIN and transaction amount.
- If the ATM is not working correctly, cancel the transaction and use a different ATM. If possible, report the problem to the bank.
- Carefully secure card and cash in the wallet, handbag or pocket before leaving the ATM.
- Do not leave the receipt behind. Compare ATM receipts to monthly statement. It is the best way to guard against fraud and it makes record-keeping easier.
- Do not let other people use your card. If your card is lost or stolen, report it immediately to the bank.

Comparative charges

To help the public make an informed judgment or enlightened decision regarding their choice of banks for their ATM transactions, the BSP also encouraged people to find out the comparative ATM charges of banks to cardholders of other banks.

A list of comparative ATM charges to cardholders of other banks is posted on the BSP website—<http://www.bsp.gov.ph/banking/servicefee.htm>. Banks charge cardholders of other banks between P5 and P12 per withdrawal. Some Megalink member-banks charge noncardholders P1 to P2 for a balance inquiry.

The banks with the lowest charges for cardholders of other banks are Centennial Bank, HSBC Savings Bank and Philippine Veterans Bank.

Depositors are likewise encouraged to report immediately to the bank concerned any erroneous entries in their deposit accounts for prompt correction and/or to report any delayed bank action to:

Financial Consumer Affairs Group, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, 10th Floor, Multistorey Building, Mabini, Manila. E-mail address: consumeraffairs@bsp.gov.ph telephone Nos.: Direct line (+632) 523-3631 and trunkline (+632) 524-7011 local 2584.

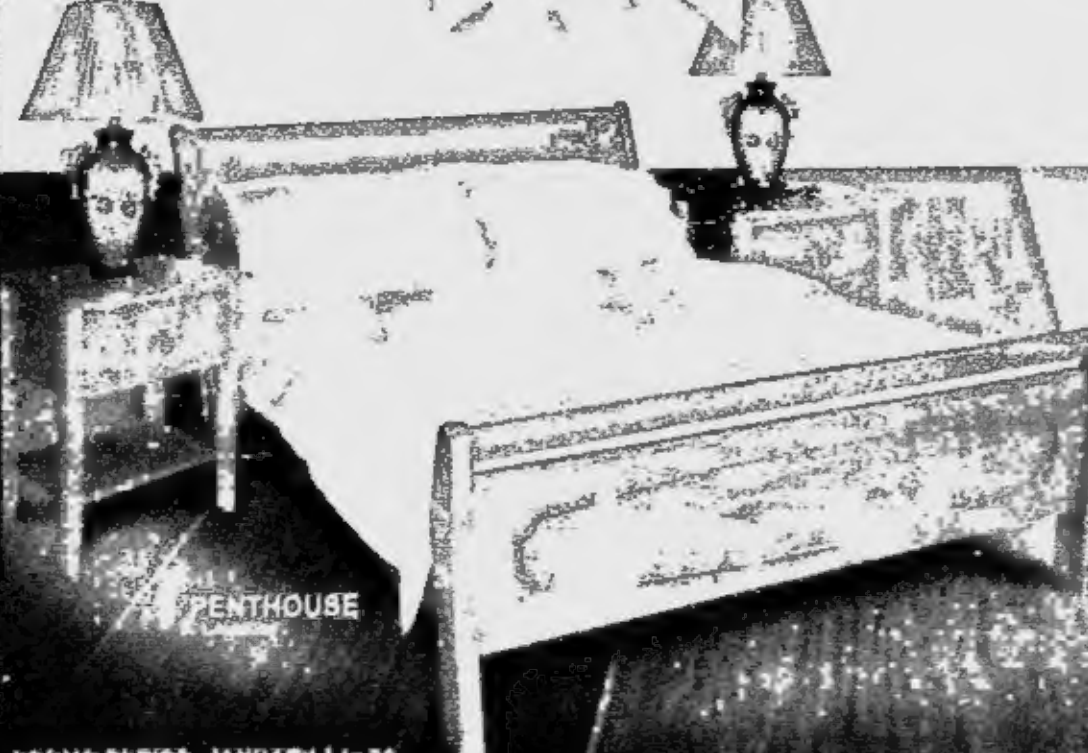
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Congress of the Philippines
Metro Manila
Fourteenth Congress
First Regular Session

Begin and held in Metro Manila, on Monday, the twenty-third day of July, two thousand seven.

**RULES OF PROCEDURE GOVERNING
INQUIRIES IN AID OF LEGISLATION**

Section 1. Power to Conduct Inquiries. — Pursuant to Section 21, Article VI of the Constitution, the House of Representatives or any of its committees may conduct inquiries in aid of legislation in accordance with these rules.

The filing or pendency of a case before any court, tribunal or quasi-judicial or administrative body shall not stop or abate any inquiry conducted to carry out a legislative purpose.

Section 2. Modes of Initiation. — Inquiries may be initiated through the following modes:

- a. *motu proprio* action of a committee on any matter within its jurisdiction upon a majority vote of all its Members; or
- b. upon order of the House of Representatives through:
 - b1. the referral to the appropriate committee of a privilege speech containing or conveying a request or demand for the conduct of an inquiry, upon motion of the Majority Leader or his/her deputies; or
 - b2. the adoption of a resolution reported out by the Committee on Rules, after making a determination on the necessity and propriety of the conduct of an inquiry by a committee, directing a committee to conduct an inquiry: *Provided*, That all resolutions directing any committee to conduct an inquiry shall be referred to the Committee on Rules; or
 - b3. the referral of a petition filed or information given by any person not a Member of the House requesting such inquiry to the appropriate committee by the Committee on Rules after making a determination on the necessity and propriety of the conduct of an inquiry: *Provided*, That such petition or information is endorsed by the Speaker to the Committee on Rules and is given under oath, stating the facts upon which it is based, and accompanied by supporting documents.

Section 3. Changing the Committee(s) Authorized or Directed to Conduct an Inquiry. — The committee(s) authorized or directed to conduct an inquiry may be changed through:

- a. a motion of the Majority Leader approved in plenary: *Provided*, That in the case of resolutions on inquiries previously adopted, the motion shall amend said resolutions accordingly; and
- b. the timely filing of a motion for reconsideration of the adoption of a resolution directing a committee to conduct an inquiry.

Section 4. Conduct of Inquiry. — The committee(s) authorized and directed to conduct an inquiry may:

- a. upon a majority vote of all its Members, invite any other interested committee(s) or Members thereof to attend its hearings: *Provided*, That the committee(s) or Members thereof so invited shall not participate in the preparation and approval of the report on the investigation; and
- b. constitute sub-committees composed of at least one-fifth (1/5) of the total number of committee Members for the purpose of performing any and all acts which the committee as a whole is authorized to perform in the conduct of an inquiry except to punish for contempt.

The findings and recommendations of the sub-committees shall be submitted for approval and other appropriate action(s) thereon by the mother committee: *Provided*, That findings and recommendations including summary statements thereon or publications related thereto shall not be released by any Member of the sub-committee and the secretariat staff prior to the inclusion of the final committee report in the Calendar of Business as provided in Section 17 hereof.

Section 5. Joint Inquiry or Investigation. — When a privilege speech, resolution, petition or information is referred to two or more committees, a joint inquiry by the said committees shall be conducted.

Section 6. Quorum. — One-fifth (1/5) of all the Members of a committee or a majority of all the Members of a subcommittee shall constitute a quorum. For purposes of determining the existence of a quorum, the Speaker, the Deputy Speakers, the Majority Leader, the Deputy Majority Leaders, the Minority Leader and the Deputy Minority Leaders or the Members deputized by them shall be added to the total number of committee or sub-committee members, as the case may be, if they are present in a meeting. In cases of joint referrals, a quorum must be present in each of the committees concerned.

Section 7. Executive Sessions. — If the committee or sub-committee deems that the examination of a witness in a public hearing may endanger national security, it shall conduct the examination in an executive session, and shall make a determination of the necessity or propriety of conducting further examinations of such witness in a public hearing.

Attendance in executive sessions shall be limited to Members of the committee, the committee secretariat staff and such other persons whose presence are required or allowed by the Chairperson.

Testimony taken or evidence presented in an executive session, or any summary or excerpt thereof or documents related thereto, in whole or in part, shall not be made public, unless authorized by a majority vote of the Members present, there being a quorum.

Section 8. Attendance of Witnesses. — The committee shall have the power to issue *subpoena ad testificandum* and *subpoena duces tecum* to witnesses in any part of the country, signed by the Chairperson or acting Chairperson and the Speaker or acting Speaker. However, if the committee is unable to secure the signature of the Speaker or acting Speaker on a *subpoena ad testificandum* and/or *subpoena duces tecum*, it may request the Committee on Rules to act on the matter. Upon the recommendation of the Committee on Rules through a majority vote of all its Members after determining that the attendance of a witness is indispensable to the effective conduct of the inquiry, the Speaker shall issue a *subpoena ad testificandum* and/or a *subpoena duces tecum* to compel the attendance of a witness.

Within Metro Manila, *subpoena ad testificandum* and *subpoena duces tecum* shall be served by the Sergeant-at-Arms or his duly authorized deputies. Outside Metro Manila, service of these processes may be made by the appropriate police officer or authority of the town or city upon request of the Secretary General.

Subpoenas shall be served to witnesses at least three (3) days before a scheduled hearing in order to give them every opportunity to prepare for the hearing and to employ counsel, should they desire, and shall be accompanied by a notice stating that the witness may convey to the committee, by mail, telephone or any other electronic communication device, his/her desire to confer with the secretary of the committee prior to the date of the hearing.

Section 9. Rights and Duties of Witnesses. — The rights of witnesses including their right against self-incrimination shall be respected.

Witnesses who are not government officials summoned by the committee shall be entitled, upon their request and subject to the approval of the Speaker, to reasonable transportation expenses and such other amounts as may be deemed necessary for their stay in Metro Manila.

Witnesses shall testify under oath to be administered by the Chairperson or by any other person authorized by law.

A witness shall be limited to giving information relevant and germane to the subject matter under investigation. The committee shall rule upon the admissibility of any testimony or information presented by a witness. Privileged communications shall be respected.

Any witness desiring to deliver or present a prepared or written statement before the committee shall file a copy of such statement, under oath, with the secretary of the committee within forty-eight (48) hours before the hearing at which the statement is to be delivered or presented.

Such statements or portions thereof that are relevant and germane to the subject of the investigation may, at the conclusion of the testimony of the witness, and upon approval by a majority vote of the Members of the committee, a quorum being present, be inserted into the official transcript of the proceedings.

A witness shall be allowed to request for and be granted postponement of his/her appearance before the committee or sub-committee on grounds that render such witness physically unable to attend the inquiry or investigation: *Provided*, That the fact of physical inability to attend the inquiry or investigation is supported by appropriate medical or other certification as may be required by the committee or sub-committee, and: *Provided*

further, That no witness shall be granted more than two (2) postponements of appearance before the committee without justifiable cause.

Section 10. Rights and Duties of Persons Affected by a Hearing. — Where applicable, any person named in a public hearing or in the released record of testimonies given in executive sessions, who has not been previously so named shall, within a reasonable time thereafter, be notified of such fact by registered letter, return receipt requested, to his/her address last known to the committee. The notice shall include:

- a. a statement that the person has been so named;
- b. date and place of hearing where the person was named;
- c. name of the person who testified; and
- d. information that a copy of the *Rules of Procedure Governing Inquiries in Aid of Legislation* is available for his/her perusal in the House.

Any person so notified who believes that his/her character or reputation was adversely affected may, within seven (7) days after receipt of said notice:

- a. communicate with the secretary of the committee; and/or
- b. request to appear in person before the committee in public session and give testimony, at his/her own expense.

Any person testifying under the foregoing provisions shall be accorded the same privileges as any other witness appearing before the committee, and may be questioned concerning any matter relevant and germane to the subject of the investigation.

Section 11. Contempt. — The committee may punish any person for contempt, by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Members present, there being a quorum. The following shall be grounds for citing any person in contempt:

- a. refusal without legal excuse to obey summons;
- b. refusal to be sworn or placed under affirmation;
- c. refusal to answer any relevant inquiry;
- d. refusal to produce any books, papers, documents or records that are relevant to the inquiry and are in his/her possession;
- e. acting in a disrespectful manner towards any Member of the committee or any misbehavior in the presence of the committee; or
- f. undue interference in the conduct of proceedings during meetings.

Contempt of the committee shall be deemed contempt of the House. The person cited in this section may, upon order of the committee, be detained in such place as the Chairperson or acting Chairperson may designate.

Section 12. Penalty. — By a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Members present, there being a quorum, those cited under Section 11, paragraphs (e) and (f) shall be detained for a period not exceeding ten (10) days in a place designated by the Chairperson or acting Chairperson under the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Section 13. Appearance of Counsel. — The person at whose instance the inquiry was initiated may be represented by counsel.

A witness shall be informed by the committee or sub-committee that he/she may be represented by counsel. When informed by a witness of his/her desire to be represented by counsel or when such witness requests to be represented by counsel, the committee or sub-committee may provide a *counsel de officio* or allow him/her to be assisted by counsel of his/her own choice.

The participation of counsel for the witness during the hearing and while the witness is testifying shall be limited to advising said witness of his/her legal rights.

Counsel for a witness shall conduct himself/herself in a professional manner and shall observe proper decorum. Otherwise, upon a majority vote of the Members present, there being a quorum, such counsel shall be subject to contempt or to such other disciplinary action that may include censure and removal from the room where the hearing is being conducted.

A counsel ordered removed from the room where the hearing is being conducted may, upon his/her request, be allowed to remain in the room as an observer. As such, he/she shall sit in the place reserved for the general public and shall have no participation in the proceedings.

In cases where a counsel for a witness is ordered removed from the room, the witness shall be given reasonable time as may be determined by the committee to secure the services of another counsel. Should the witness deliberately or capriciously fail or refuse to obtain the services of another counsel, a *counsel de officio* may be provided to the witness by the committee within a reasonable time. Thereafter, the hearing shall continue and the testimony of such witness shall be heard.

Section 14. Safekeeping and Release of Record of Testimonies of Witnesses. — The testimony of witnesses shall be recorded *verbatim*. Records of testimonies given in executive sessions shall be placed in the custody of the Secretary General who shall ensure their preservation and confidentiality.

A witness or his/her counsel, at the expense of the witness and upon written request duly approved by the committee Chairperson, may obtain transcripts of any public testimony of witnesses from the secretary of the committee.

No committee report, an excerpt or summary statement of the contents thereof, or any publication related thereto, shall be released by any Member of the committee and its secretariat staff prior to the inclusion of the report in the Calendar of Business.

Section 15. Termination of Inquiry. The committee shall terminate an inquiry, and submit a report thereon within sixty (60) calendar days from the date of commencement. The inquiry commences on the date of:

- a. referral of the privilege speech, petition or information to the pertinent committee; or
- b. adoption of resolution directing or authorizing the conduct of an inquiry.

Section 16. Report of Committee. — The report shall contain the findings of the committee on the subject matter of the inquiry, the grounds on which its findings are based and its recommendations, if any. The report shall be approved by a majority vote of the Members present, there being a quorum. Members who vote against the approval of the report and who do not sign the majority report may make concurring or dissenting opinions.

The report, together with any concurring and dissenting opinion, shall be filed with the Secretary General who shall include the same in the Order of Business within three (3) days from receipt thereof.

In case of joint inquiry, the committees concerned shall be jointly responsible for submitting the report to the House on the measure referred to them for consideration. The first committee mentioned in the joint referral shall be the lead committee and shall be principally responsible for preparing the report to the House: *Provided*, That the committees may decide to designate another committee among them to prepare the report.

Section 17. Plenary Action on the Report. — The report, upon inclusion in the Order of Business, shall be referred to the Committee on Rules for appropriate action. The Committee on Rules shall, thereafter, include the report in the Calendar of Business.

Upon inclusion of the report in the Calendar of Business, the Plenary may approve or adopt, disapprove or reject, in whole or in part, the report and its recommendation(s) or commit it to the archives.

Section 18. Internal Rules. — The committee tasked to conduct an inquiry may adopt internal rules of procedure: *Provided*, That these rules are consistent with the Rules of the House and to these rules.

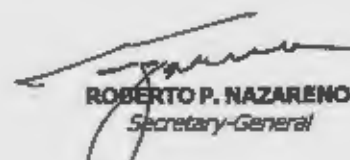
Section 19. Rules of Procedure and Evidence. — The Rules of Court shall be supplementary to these rules.

Section 20. Effectivity. — These Rules shall take effect seven (7) days after publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Adopted,


JOSE DE VENEZIA JR.
Speaker

This Rules of Procedure Governing Inquiries in Aid of Legislation was adopted by the House of Representatives on November 20, 2007.


ROBERTO P. NAZARENO
Secretary-General

Atong Ang may yet get travel permit from court

By Jocelyn R. Uy

CHARLIE "ATONG" ANG MAY GET TO GIVE his daughter away in marriage in the United States after all.

Ang—on probation for two years after he was convicted of the lesser charge of corrupting a public official in the plunder case against deposed President Joseph Estrada—has gotten government lawyers to agree to let him fly to Las Vegas, Nevada, to attend his daughter Joaneive's wedding on Jan. 19.

The Office of the Special Prosecutor said it would raise no objection and yesterday filed a manifestation with the Sandiganbayan, pointing out the trip was "a matter" between Ang and his probation officer.

"The probation officer has, in fact, expressed [her] conformity with the urgent motion for Ang's travel to the US," the special prosecutor said.

Probation officer Ceres Afonuevo, who has been supervising Ang the past seven months after he was convicted in May and who was present at the hearing, assured the court of Ang's "sincerity and candor."

Ang last week had asked the anti-graft court to let him leave for Las Vegas on Jan. 5. He intends to be away 25 days.

Ang was a gam-

bling crony of Estrada. Once, they were videotaped in a casino, a no-no for government officials since Estrada was Vice President at the time. Estrada himself was pardoned by President Macapagal-Arroyo in October after he was convicted of plunder.

But even if Ang were allowed to leave for Las Vegas by the court, he would still have to contend with the US government.

Yesterday, through his lawyer, Ruth Castelo, Ang informed the Sandiganbayan Special Division that he was awaiting word from the US Embassy in Manila on whether he—after his extradition from the United States last year—may renew his visa and reenter the country.

He also needs a new passport.

"While waiting for a reply from the US Embassy, Ang respectfully begs the court to allow him to apply for a passport con-

sidering it takes eight working days to process an electronic passport," Castelo said in her six-page manifestation.

To assure the court that he would return, Ang reiterated he was willing to post a P500,000 bond.

An unidentified friend has submitted to the court the title to a piece of property valued at P1.3 million to guarantee Ang would return, Castelo said.

Ang has twice been denied permission by the anti-graft court to travel to Cambodia where a lottery firm was interested in hiring him as a consultant.

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Sumilao farmers hit San Miguel bid to discredit them

By Jerome Aning

FARMERS FROM SUMILAO, Bukidnon who marched to Manila to press their claim over a 144-ha land owned by San Miguel Foods Inc. yesterday deplored the food conglomerate's alleged attempts to discredit their bid to subject the property to agrarian reform.

In a statement from Sumilao, the 165 farmer-claimants said they were "roused to the heat of the controversy" following the full-page advertisements placed by SMFI in various newspapers.

The ads cited the benefits that the operations of SMFI would bring to the province of Bukidnon and its people while questioning the legal standing of the farmers over the disputed land in Barangay San Vicente, Sumilao.

Samuel Merida, president of farmers' Mapalad Multipurpose Cooperative said the ad only made it clear that SMFI "will spare no expense to boost its own claim and discredit the Sumilao farmers."

Their money, our rights

"This is a battle between their money and our rights as indigenous people and as farmer beneficiaries," he said.

The farmers embarked on a 1,700-km march to Manila in October to dramatize their plight. On Dec. 18, President Macapagal-Arroyo revoked the conversion order for the property, reclassifying the land to agricultural and thus placing it under the government's Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

In its ad, SMFI said that a number of the farmers were already agrarian reform beneficiaries and thus were no longer eligible to lay further claim to

the Sumilao property.

Arlene Bag-ao, a lawyer of the farmers, admitted that 68 of the 165 farmers have benefited from the adjacent 66-hectare Carlos estate.

"The fact remains that even those who have been beneficiaries of the Carlos estate only have a pittance—ranging from 0.4 to 0.9 hectares—from agrarian reform. The law defines a family size farm to be not more than 3 hectares.

The Sumilao farmers said they would push DAR to immediately issue a notice of coverage to begin the implementation of the President's order to place the property under CARP.

Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangadaman said his office would issue the notice of coverage 15 days after the President's issued the order. But he said the SMFI had the option to file a motion for reconsideration or bring the matter to the courts.

The property was formerly owned by Norberto Quisumbing who later sold it to SMFI in 2002.

With SMFI expected to contest the President's order, a militant group fishermen assailed Ms Arroyo for insulting the farmers by giving them false hopes and empty promises.

In a statement, Fernando Hicap, chair of the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya), said that "in reality, Malacañang merely treated the Sumilao farmers to a merry go-round of waiting, waiting and waiting."

"What Mrs. Arroyo delivered during their meeting were empty promises, false hopes and class betrayal," he added. With Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

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Honoring Adrian Cristobal

SEN. MAR ROXAS HAS filed a resolution for the Senate to honor the late Adrian E. Cristobal Sr. for his contributions to Philippine journalism and literary arts spanning five decades.

In Senate Resolution 261, Roxas said Cristobal "deserves to be honored and fondly remembered for his dedication and excellence in journalism and writing and public service as former labor secretary and chair of the Social Security System."

Roxas said that despite failing to get a college diploma, Cristobal was able to excel in his fields of choice and garnered respect as one of the country's foremost intellectuals.

Cristobal started his journalism career as a writer-re-

porter of the Manila Times in the 1950s and he went on to become an editorial writer, publisher and columnist for various publications, including the Philippine Daily Inquirer where he used to write the widely-read column.

'Breakfast table'

Cristobal also made a name in the literary arts having written several short stories ("I, Suliman") and 5 books ("The Tragedy of the Revolution" a historical essay on the betrayal and execution of Andres Bonifacio) and being the co-founder of the UP Institute of Creative Writing. Cristobal also authored the economic blueprint of President Carlos Garcia's Filipino First economic policy.

HEALTH ADVISORY

FOR THIS

HOLIDAY SEASON

Here are some health tips for the Christmas Season:

1. Be kind to your heart. Prepare a well-balanced Noche Buena and Media Noche meals. Make sure that vegetables and fruits are on the table together with your traditional ham and queso de bola. Avoid fatty and salty foods. Avoid too much drinking and don't smoke.
2. Plan Christmas activities for yourself and your family to prevent tension and stress.
3. Avoid crowded areas because organisms that cause diseases multiply and spread easily. Airy and well-ventilated areas are essential to healthy living.
4. Take care of yourself and your family against sudden changes in temperature. Children and adults may become susceptible to cough colds and fever. If your cough, colds and fever is more than five days, consult your nearest health facility.
5. Drink plenty of liquids. Drink plenty of water and fruit juices to facilitate excretion.
6. Have enough sleep. Give yourself enough sleep so that the mind and body can rest.
7. Buy safe toys with no pointed or sharp edges nor too small toys that can cause choking.

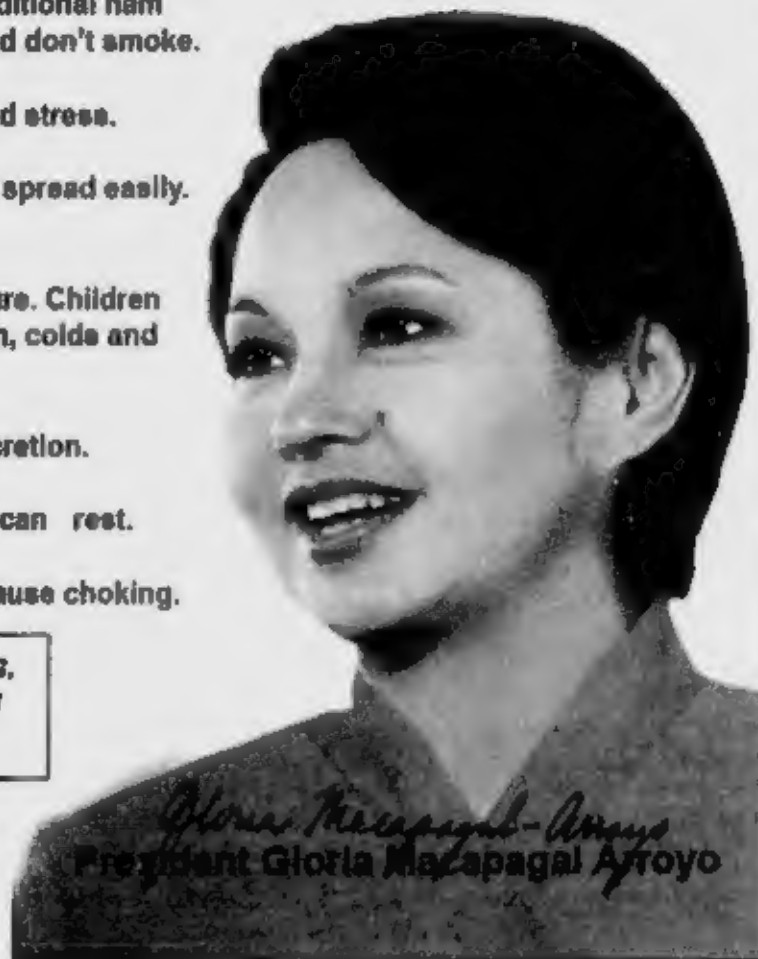
Do not use fireworks and firecrackers during the Holidays. Make some noise by using the "torotot", pots, pans and other noise-making gadgets.



Secretary Francisco Duque III
Department of Health



DOH it na!



President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo

Not innocent

HOW NICE OF THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION to raise a ruckus over the escape, or was it the release, of convicted child rapist Romeo Jalosjos. What is that expression again? They are closing the barn door after the horse has already bolted. Indeed, in the case of Jalosjos, they are firing the ranch hands too—after having unshackled the horse in the first place.

EDITORIAL The other day, President Macapagal-Arroyo fired Ricardo Dapat as director of the Bureau of Corrections, or so Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said. (Dapat reports to Gonzalez, so it was actually the justice secretary's responsibility to relieve him; the order from the President, as revealed by Gonzalez, is a transparent attempt to communicate her continuing alleged displeasure with the latest twists and turns in the Jalosjos case.)

Dapat has denied any wrongdoing, but his denial has only succeeded in tightening the noose around his neck. He said Jalosjos, who flew to Dapitan, Zamboanga del Norte, on Dec. 22, was not released but had escaped. "I did everything, but he escaped," he said in Filipino. "I am not to blame here [Wala akong kasalanan diyari]."

We beg to disagree. A prisoner's escape is an even worse act of negligence that Dapat has to answer for. But that is merely our view, based on considerations of impartial justice. Dapat's emphatic protestations that he did not release Jalosjos—the discharge order the ex-congressman has been waving about is "not valid," he said—suggest that he is more worried about Gonzalez's idea of partial justice. Partial to whom? Why, the President, of course.

Gonzalez's announcement the other day continued the series of statements he has made distancing Ms Arroyo from the Jalosjos fiasco and protecting her from the PR fallout. "Upon the instruction of the President, I have installed [retired] General [Oscar] Calderon as the acting director of the [Bureau of Corrections] vice General Dapat," Gonzalez said. He added: "I think these developments speak for themselves—the fact [for example] that General Calderon has made his appearance on the request of the President."

(That he has to strain and point out that the developments speak for themselves suggests that the decisions are in fact ambiguous, and need a little interpretative push.)

To Dapat's pained rationalizations and Gonzalez's elaborate explanations, add the outrageous manifestations of the convict's own counsel. "We will argue about reasons, but we don't question the word 'conviction' [except when he is called] a 'convicted child rapist,'" said lawyer Alfredo Jimenez. "We are urging the media to use 'convicted minor rapist,'" he added.

How nice. That makes Jalosjos sound like a petty criminal, instead of the child rapist that he is. Jimenez objects to the use of the word "child," because it has an "open meaning" and may refer to "kids, maybe toddlers, [up] to 12 years old." Well, in that case, we will continue to call Jalosjos a convicted child rapist then, because the victim he was convicted of statutory rape for was only 11 years old at the time. The last time we looked, 11 was less than 12.

(Today being Holy Innocents Day, perhaps we can also be forgiven for asking: When Herod ordered the death of all first-borns, did his lawyers quibble whether the victims should be called minors or children too?)

As anyone can see, a ranch can get pretty busy, especially when the ranchers decide to close the barn door as loudly as possible. There is certainly much to be angry about. It hardly seems credible that, in the handling of the politically powerful Jalosjos, lower-echelon officials like Dapat would act without orders from above. In all likelihood, the mess we see today is the direct result of either (a) top officials furiously back-tracking from an earlier order to accommodate Jalosjos or (b) lower officials over-zealously anticipating just such an order.

The truth is, the President wouldn't have the Jalosjos problem on her hands today if she had not decided, for reasons of her own, to commute the convicted child rapist's two life sentences to a mere 16 years last April. That decision took the shackles off the horse—and threw the barn door wide open.



Send Jalosjos back to Muntinlupa

WHAT DID I TELL YOU? CONFINING CHILD rapist and prison escapee Romeo Jalosjos in the San Ramon Penal Colony in his home province of Zamboanga del Norte is like throwing the turtle into the river. That's what he wants. And as predicted, it is like a fiesta in the penal colony as supporters flock to it to see if their idol was changed by his stay in Munti. (He has; he has become fatter.)

Prison officials are not limiting the visitors, despite the risk. Jalosjos can hold a political rally there and they wouldn't put up a finger in protest. The news is that Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez has dismissed Bureau of Corrections Director Ricardo Dapat. Dapat lang. Maybe he should do the same to San Ramon officials. The way our prison officials are coddling Jalosjos is putting to ridicule our prisons and our justice system. And maybe encouraging other criminals to rape children and escape from prison.

In fact, Malacañang and the Department of Justice may be in on it. President Macapagal-Arroyo's order that Jalosjos should not be released until he turns 70, Gonzalez's order not to release him, and Jalosjos' confinement in Zamboanga instead of Munti may all be a *moro-moro*—all part of a plan to deceive the public.

When the people became angry at the announcement that the convicted rapist sentenced to two life terms would be prematurely released before Christmas, Malacañang had to backtrack. The President must not be perceived as a coddler of child rapists, especially because she is a woman. Releasing the visiting GI who raped a Filipina to the American Embassy was bad enough. Pardon for Jalosjos makes it worse.

But maybe GMA has already given her word to Jalosjos that he would be a free man by Christmas. Maybe GMA cannot afford to displease him. He may start singing about what happened in his province during the 2004 elections.

So a script has to be written for a win-win solution. GMA must not be seen as soft on criminals with two life sentences. So Jalosjos should not be able to waltz out of prison just

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz



like that. That will please the public. But to please Jalosjos and his supporters (remember, politics is addition), the prisoner must be able to fulfill his boast to his supporters that he would be with them before yearend.

But how can he go home to Zamboanga if he is still a prisoner in Munti? So, he was allowed to dance out of Munti without the guards stopping him, and he was taken by his bodyguards to the domestic airport where a private plane flew him to Zamboanga. The anger of Malacañang and Gonzalez may all have been just for show. Even the dismissal of Dapat may be part of that show ("Pasensya ka na muna, pare"). And so perhaps was Jalosjos' rearrest by the police.

The smoking gun is that instead of being taken back to Munti and placed in the bartolino like all other escaped prisoners, Gonzalez and Malacañang allowed him to be taken to the San Ramon Penal Colony where he would be near his family and friends. In fact, Jalosjos may be allowed to leave it during the day and come back at night, and perhaps not even. All these could be part of the plan.

But people cannot be fooled all the time. The arrangement is highly unusual. First of all, penal colonies are for prisoners on good behavior. Escaping from prison (which is what Jalosjos did, whatever his lawyers say to justify it) is not "good behavior" anyway you look at it. It is very bad behavior, and other prisoners who did that, when recaptured, were immediately placed in isolation in the prison they escaped from, with all their privileges withdrawn, and another six years of imprisonment

added to the original sentence. So why is this escaped rapist being treated by the justice department like he has a halo over his head? Very unusual, di ba?

In the second place, Jalosjos has shown that he is a flight risk. Penal colonies are only for those who are not flight risks, as they are like prisons without bars. So why is Jalosjos allowed to hold his own fiesta in San Ramon?

The only way the people can be convinced that GMA and Gonzalez are not part of the conspiracy is for them to order that Jalosjos be taken back to Munti immediately, placed in isolation. In addition, they should withdraw all his privileges and charge him with trying to escape so that another sentence will be added to his two life terms. GMA should also withdraw the executive clemency she gave Jalosjos because he has shown very clearly that he does not deserve it. He has shown no remorse, he has not reformed, and is still as arrogant as ever. He is still a menace to society, especially to children.

The other *moro-moro* that goes on at this time of the year is the one performed by the police. That is the farce of putting masking tape on the barrels of the service firearms of policemen, all in the full glare of television and still cameras. That is to prevent, *kuno*, the cops from firing their guns during the New Year's Eve merry-making. Many innocent people have been killed by stray bullets from guns shot into the air on New Year's Eve. As if the tapes will prevent that.

What's to stop cops from firing their guns nevertheless and then putting new tapes on the barrels of their guns? What about the gun-crazy civilians who fire their guns to show off to their neighbors? One way to stop them is for law-abiding citizens, neighbors or not, to report these trigger-happy crazies, cops or not, and for the police to charge them with illegal discharge of firearms, and for the courts to send them to jail, not just order them to pay fines.

When malls replace public parks

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan



ately and never get to settle in. Moreover, there is the cost of maintenance and the risk that the maintenance crew themselves will settle in.

We are compelled to balance our concern about the urban poor, on one hand, and on the other, about urban blight and public plazas gone to seed. It is, to use the tired slogan, an issue of good governance and the rule of law. We love our parks and, especially at Christmas-time, people love to profess their love for the poor. We are all dumbfounded when, finally, we have to choose. My position is that homelessness is too big a problem to be solved by absorbing the homeless in public parks. Converting the Luneta into the "Noli Me Tangere Re-settlement Area" will hardly make a dent.

A positive example is a pocket park right on the outer perimeter of the UP Diliman campus, across the Stud Farm (for horses). It used to be just another vacant lot along a busy road, but it was located perilously close to, let us say, "the usual suspects" for "squatter invasions." It now looks inviting, still close to the road, but with a good breeze and playground facilities for the kids—but with a big difference. It is enclosed on all sides with steel bars and it has a gate, presumably with a lock. It is a hard choice—between giving recreational space to poor families and giving residential lots to even poorer families—and the local government was wise to have heeded Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's counsel: "Good fences make good neighbors."

Two, government must find partners in the private sector. Public-private partnership is not only the favored way abroad, but for us with a cash-strapped Third World government, it is

the sensible way. The La Mesa Watershed Resort and Ecological Park is, I understand, the joint work of the Quezon City government, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, and ABS-CBN network's Bantay Kalikasan Foundation. NGO partners bring in not just desperately needed funds. They bring in expertise, in the person of committed activists and professionals. They bring in the political will as well, because good parks cannot be left to uncaring bureaucrats.

A not-quite-private partner is actually the UP Diliman campus, which has declared its mahogany-shaded avenue a "car-less oval" on Sundays—a veritable public park where entire families jog, bike and picnic. It is the one constructive contribution of UP to the nation; the other contributions are, should we say, de-constructive, given those godless infidels.

Three, we must tolerate the limited "marketization" of the public space. In terms of social mobility, the shopping mall has two faces. It has a democratizing face, because anyone can enter even if only to look and not to buy. For the typical OFW family suddenly armed with disposable income to even venture into that air-conditioned space is a sign of having "arrived." But it also has an exclusionary face, in that it stratifies the various publics into a pecking order of snobbery, as the quest for middle-class respectability quickly morphs into a taste for upper-class snootiness.

And so the double-sided phenomenon of the *tiangge*, the flea market. When they invaded the air-conditioned malls, it was the backlash against chain marketing and brand-name consumerism, the re-gentrification of the *palengke*. But now they have also invaded public plazas, as parks subsidize their upkeep—legitimately—by renting out space to stall operators. This form of marketization must be tightly managed, because it shows the "creeping expropriation" of the public space not by the homeless but, this time, by potential free-riders on the common wealth.

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Perils facing journalists undiminished

BETWEEN CHRISTMAS DAY AND THE NEW Year, the guns were silent on the communist insurgency front as government security forces and the New People's Army observed a fragile four-day truce, breaking a cycle of violence that wracked the country in 2007. The only front on which the carnage did not catch up with the spirit of tolerance of the holiday season was the killing fields of journalism.

In the morning of Dec. 24, a man on a motorcycle gunned down a journalist driving his car, after he had done his broadcast over station dxGO in Davao City. Fernando Lintuan was the fifth journalist to be killed by death squads in the country in 2007, and the 54th member of the media murdered in extrajudicial executions during the Arroyo administration since 2001.

Davao City Rep. Prospero Nograles, a friend of Lintuan, said the journalist could have been killed by the Davao Death Squad, a vigilante group. The manager of dxGO station, Raul Antopuesto, said the attack on Lintuan was "definitely job-related," suggesting it could have stemmed from Lintuan's attacks on corruption associated with the construction of the People's Park, a project of the city government. Antopuesto said Lintuan in a recent broadcast had discussed issues such as the ban on aerial spraying on banana plantations in the city and the People's Park. Lintuan claimed that the trees planted in the park were overpriced.

The Philippine National Police said it was looking into the possible involvement of the Davao Death Squad, a vigilante group known for executing drug dealers and members of criminal gangs in the city. There are other angles the PNP is investigating.

In the wake of the killings of provincial journalists, police investigations have never clearly established the motives behind the murders that have been vaguely described as "job-related," meaning exposing local government transactions tainted with corruption.

Certain facts are clear and provide a context for the death squad killings. The outbreak of killings

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronilla



during the Christmas season is depressing. It underscores the unabated perils facing journalists in the coming year and highlights the risks arising from their occupation as well as the fact that among society groups involved in some form of civic-duty activity, journalists are the most vulnerable to violent retaliation by people they offend in the course of the exercise of their profession and are the least protected by the government.

Without prejudging the police investigation, it must be pointed out in context that, according to a report of the Committee to Protect Journalists, an independent group that promotes press freedom and defends the rights of journalists, more journalists were killed worldwide in 2007 than in any year since 1994. The CPJ's annual report said 64 journalists died in connection with their work in 2007. Nearly half of those deaths—31—took place in Iraq, a war-torn country, which was ranked as the deadliest country for journalists for the fifth consecutive year. Most of the killings in 2007 were targeted attacks, some of them direct reprisal for journalists' works.

In the Philippines, which is not a war zone, the killings of journalists and the estimated 800 political activists, mostly identified with leftist groups, have taken place since 2001, against the backdrop of the government's all-out war to end the communist insurgency. In his final report to the United Nations, Special Rapporteur Philip Alston said the victims included political opponents of the government. The report said these killings eliminated civil society leaders, including human rights defenders, trade unionist and land reform advocates,

and intimidated a vast number of civil society actors and "narrowed the country's political discourse."

The murders of Filipino journalists appear to have been less ideologically related to the war against the communist insurgency than the extrajudicial execution of leftist activists.

A report last October of the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility found that nearly 90 percent of the journalists slain in the line of duty during the Arroyo administration since 2001 were exposing corruption. Others were killed for reporting on illegal gambling and the drug trade in their localities.

Thirty-three journalists have been killed in the line of duty since 2001, the report said, while 20 others were killed because of non-media related causes. Of those slain in the line of duty, 29 were exposing corrupt local government practices in their provinces or other illegal practices.

Most of those killed were block-timers in local radio stations not affiliated with national networks. The CMFR report said that 15.2 percent of the cases stemming from the killings were currently being tried, 51.5 percent were under investigation, 15.2 had been dismissed for lack of evidence against the suspects, and 21.1 percent were pending prosecution.

Some provinces were more dangerous for journalists than others. In 2006, Luzon proved to be as dangerous to journalists as Mindanao. Most of the killings occurred near the journalists' place of work, which indicates that the murders were premeditated and well-planned.

Despite increasing international pressure to put a stop to the killings, the report said, the reaction of the government has been "slow in coming."

The violence against journalists highlights certain tendencies. As members of civil society performing a civic duty, journalists appear to be a group that local officials exposed for corruption love to bully. The national government also likes to use journalists as scapegoats when it tries to put down rebellions and civil unrest.

Surprises at the movies

SITTING THROUGH THREE DAYS OF ENTRIES to the Metro Manila Film Festival, one braces oneself for the experience. Should one hold one's comments—even laughter—in case the producers, directors or even stars are around? Who can one talk to during breaks, without inadvertently revealing one's preferences or choices?

Still, there are blessings to be found in a marathon viewing. Every year, I resolve to watch as many MMFF movies as I can, review a lot of them, and encourage the public to patronize those worth their time and money. After all, the local movie industry deserves all the help it can get. But each year, I end up watching fewer movies than I would want to, mainly because the post-holiday stress requires more rest time than ever these days, and because it's been increasingly difficult to corral family members to watch local movies with me.

This year, though, juror duty has given me a chance to see all nine entries, and while sitting through some movies was admittedly a chore, others served up pleasant surprises.

One such surprise was "Katas ng Saudi," although it shouldn't have come as all that surprising because the film had already been given an "A" rating by the Cinema Evaluation Board. The movie is the latest manifestation of how issues surrounding the OFW phenomenon have become mainstreamed in popular culture, from TV commercials for instant noodles and telecoms, to pop ballads, sitcoms and movies. The story line of "Katas," in fact, hews closely to a TV drama that was one of the earliest attempts to take a serious look at the "social costs" of migrant labor. In both movie and TV drama, a Filipino worker arrives home from Saudi Arabia ("katas" in the movie's title refers to the earnings made in that Middle Eastern country) after many years' absence and hardly recognizes the home and the family he left behind.

WHILE his earnings have allowed his family to climb several rungs up the social and economic ladder, they seem to have left him behind. While the father tries to re-assert his paternal

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



authority, it's clear that the power structure in the family has undergone a major shift. The children look to their mother, who has been running the household in his absence, as the authority and provider. The older children have likewise grown into teenagers, resentful of their father's attempt at re-imposing his own brand of discipline, and embarrassing them with his social awkwardness and "old fashioned" values.

Under Jose Javier Reyes' direction, the movie is a simple, straightforward exposition of this situation, including the many demands put on the returning OFW by his barkada and his own family, especially his older sister and her ne'er-do-well husband. One can feel the worker's increasing frustration, puzzlement and confusion, especially when his resolve to stay home and lend a hand in raising his children crumbles under relentless economic pressure.

The only problem with "Katas ng Saudi" is its lead star, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, and he already acquires himself satisfactorily in this role. But he turns out to be a self-conscious actor, mugging for his more succinct comedic lines, and visibly working himself up for more dramatic scenes. Lorna Tolentino, as the wife caught in her own transition, does an excellent, low-key take on her role, but Jinggoy offers little for her to react to.

My main issue with the movie is that Jinggoy's character remains static, learning little from his experiences, save for an implausible last-minute shift in his parenting style. But I am thankful OFWs and their families finally get serious, thoughtful treatment from local

cinema, and hope that everyone who loves an OFW, or knows of one, will take the time to watch this movie.

ANOTHER pleasant discovery is "Resiklo," a movie set in the apocalyptic future when the human race must struggle against invading aliens who use mutants and their army of robots to reign over the earth.

Admittedly, the movie is derivative, with footprints from movies like "Matrix," "Escape from New York," "Star Wars," "Waterworld" and "Transformers" evident in many scenes. But to be fair, the movie does sew the patchwork plot together if not seamlessly, then at least logically. I am impressed, though, with director Mark Reyes' handling of the CGI special effects, which accounts for much of the movie's exorbitant costs, I'm told. This time, they're used smartly and naturally, created not to impress, but to move the story forward. The robots also look impressive and "move" with agility.

As with "Katas," the only problem with "Resiklo" is its lead, Bong Revilla. He looks amazingly unfit for a character who's supposed to be the main defender of the human enclave called "Paraso." I don't know why he didn't even bother to get in better shape for the movie, especially since the younger support actors, led by Dingdong Dantes and Paolo Contis, and even Revilla's sons Jolo and Brian, are fit and buff, and carry out their martial arts and sports action scenes with impressive ease.

I especially enjoyed Contis' comic role here, compared to his conflicted policeman in "Banal." In "Resiklo," Contis displays deft comic timing and serves as an effective foil to the more grim characters. Jennylyn Mercado is Revilla's romantic interest, after a fashion, but nothing more torrid than intense looks pass between them. There is, after all, strong "yuck" factor in the pairing of the middle-aged Revilla and the teenaged Mercado. As in any action film, women characters are required to do little more than stand around and wait to be rescued, mother the children in the enclave, or, as with Mylene Dizon's character, pose sexily in provocative outfits and act all caty and tough.

A feast of pork and fish

THE CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS AND NEW Year's Day is an imported tradition grafted so well into our culture that we cannot imagine a time or place without it. Most of the food we serve during Christmas and New Year's Eve have Western roots. Whether these are fresh out of a store or home-cooked, almost all the cakes, fruit salads, sweets and desserts that adorn our festive tables can be traced to a Western source.

This year I looked at dinner tables and wondered what a feast would have been like in pre-Spanish times. Archaeological evidence suggests that early Filipinos ate a lot of fish and shellfish. This diet needs no explanation because we live in an archipelago. We know that pre-historic Filipinos used fire, fashioned vessels from earthenware, hunted animals and cooked their food, but how did they season this? Were meals largely broiled or boiled? What did early Filipinos consider special enough for a feast?

If we follow Jose Rizal's line of reasoning, as expressed in his annotations to the 17th century work "Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas," we can blame all our ills on the Spanish colonial period. Rizal argued that the Spanish intrusion into our history arrested our development. So what would our feasts be today, if the West had strayed elsewhere?

Mention the word pre-historic and people immediately think of dinosaurs and cave men, which is correct. But the term "pre-historic" actually covers a lot of ground, long after dinosaurs became extinct. Pre-history is the past before written records. With archeology, we are guessing from remains and artifacts, but from a written record we are trying to see the past through the eyes of another.

The earliest record of a Filipino feast from a written source comes from the 16th-century account of the Magellan expedition by his chronicler Antonio Pigafetta, the only one inclined to record everything on paper. (We can only wish that Enrique, the slave Magellan picked up on an earlier voyage, had written his account, because there is a

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo



school of thought began by the late Carlos Quirino that claims Enrique was originally from the Philippines because he could communicate with Visayan peoples.) For a strict Catholic, it was not the best time for a feast. On Good Friday, March 29, 1521, Magellan and his men were supposed to be fasting, but then a small party had gone ashore to acquire provisions, fresh food and water for the ships. The day before, the king of the island offered Magellan some gifts: a sizeable piece of gold and a basket of ginger worth a lot back in Europe. To impress the king and in an exercise of pride, Magellan refused the gifts and returned them with a message that he was willing to pay for what they took, and that they came as friends, not enemies. Thus, what should have been seen as an insult, so impressed the king that he had a feast laid out for the small group that disembarked from Magellan's flagship. Pigafetta wrote:

"When I had set foot on shore, this king raised his hands to heaven, then he turned toward us, and we did likewise. After this he took me by the hand, and one of his notable men took my companion and he led us to a place covered with reeds, where there was a Balanghat, that is to say, a boat 80 feet or thereabouts in length, like a foist. And there we seated ourselves with the said king on the poop of that boat, always speaking with him by signs. And his men stood round us with their swords, spears and bucklers."

"The king then sent for a dish of pork flesh and wine. The manner of their drinking is this: They raise their hands to heaven first, then take the

drinking vessel in their right hand, and extend the fist of their left hand to the company. Which the king did offering me his fist, with which I thought he would strike me. But I did likewise toward him. Thus, with this ceremony and other signs of friendship we banqueted, and then supped with him. I ate flesh on Good Friday being unable to do otherwise."

Then Pigafetta started collecting words and their meanings from the people, writing these down to the people who marveled at the magic of writing. Their speech was recorded in written form. As night approached they were fed again:

"Meanwhile, the hour of supper having come, two large porcelain dishes were brought, one full of rice, and the other of pork flesh with its broth and gravy. We supped with the same signs and manners."

They then proceeded to the king's house where they were fed yet again. "The king made us sit on a reed mat with our legs folded like tailors. And after half an hour, a dish of fish roasted in pieces was brought, and ginger freshly gathered, and wine. The eldest son of the king (who was the prince) came where we were. And the king told him to seat himself beside us, which he did. Then two dishes were brought, one of fish in its sauce and the other of rice. And this was in order that we might eat with said prince. And my companion made so good cheer in drinking that he became intoxicated."

They lay on a reed mat with cushions and pillows of leaves. Pigafetta and his group were offered breakfast the next morning but they declined so that they could return to their ships. Thus, we will never know what early Filipinos ate for breakfast.

What kind of pork and fish dish was this? Pigafetta was too occupied with other things to describe the food, fully leaving us to our imaginations.

Comments are welcome at [aoampo@atenso.edu](mailto:aocampo@atenso.edu)

Cycles

I LISTENED TO THE CHRISTMAS BROADCAST OF THE Queen of England—on YouTube. I haven't turned into a royalist, but I was just so intrigued by the idea of creating an entire Royal Channel on YouTube, featuring not just her latest broadcast but also old video clips of the royal family and, best of all, her first televised broadcast of a Christmas message exactly 50 years ago.

It's the anthropologist in me, with a special interest in linguistics. Many Filipinos think there's only one British English, the kind you hear on BBC, until they visit England and realize that more people there speak like Eliza Doolittle in "My Fair Lady" (which was in turn adapted from George Bernard Shaw's play, "Pygmalion"): "The rhine in Spine rhines minely on the phne" instead of the "The rain in Spain rains mainly on the plain."

Language drips with class snobbery—and reverse snobbery. I had a Filipino friend who, weary of Westerners expressing surprise that he could speak English, would reply, naturally in the Queen's English, "But I had an English nanny." He wasn't referring to Nanny but to a nanny, a *yoyo*.

Vowels I digress. Here's something even more interesting: A team of phonetics experts at the University of Munich actually analyzed all of the Queen's broadcast Christmas messages from 1952 (using radio, initially and then television). The team concluded, in an article published in the *Journal of Phonetics*, that the Queen's English has been evolving, from the "Received Pronunciation" toward a "Standard Southern British English." RP (that's Received Pronunciation, not Republic of the Philippines) is not determined by geography but by class, and is characterized by a particular accent, especially in the way vowels are pronounced.

Look up www.youtube.com/theroyalchannel and play back the 1957 and 2007 Christmas messages for the Queen's vowels: "em" is now pronounced "am," "femly" more like "family" even as her "o" remains an aristocratic "yo" (as in "the young and yold"). "Egyo" has become "agyo" and just might end up "ago" eventually. The phonetics experts also say her voice is now an octave lower; apparently, a higher pitched voice is part of royal demeanor.

The Queen began her 2007 Christmas message by playing a segment of her 1957 television speech, and then observing: "One of the features of growing old is a heightened awareness of change." Appreciating change, she said, "also makes you aware of what has remained constant."

She should know, indeed, moving from radio to television to the Internet with relative ease. In her 80s, the Queen comes through as someone who has no fear of the new, or of the future. She remains the constant monarch, even as she is affected by the world around her, all the way to her English. Entering YouTube was a risk (you'll find there are now all kinds of spoofs on her speech and on the Royal Channel).

Halfway around the world, the King of Thailand recently celebrated his 80th birthday. His publicists aren't using YouTube broadcasts yet, but the country is filled with larger-than-life photographs of the king. His health has been failing but he remains a force to deal with, speaking out on many issues, including, a few years ago, his displeasure with the way Thai pronunciation was slowly becoming "Americanized."

The Thai King will have to play the role of the constant monarch in the months ahead as the country goes through political turbulence. Thailand just had elections and the party that garnered the most votes was the People's Power Party. Don't get deceived by the name; it's as right-wing as right-wing goes, supporting Thaksin Shinawatra, the prime minister ousted by a military coup. Currently in exile in England and now going by the nickname Frank (because his surname sounds like "Sinatra" to the British), Thaksin hopes to be able to return to Thailand soon.

Over in Pakistan, a beleaguered Pervez Musharraf is looking for ways to remain his country's leader, but two other former prime ministers, Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto, have flown home, also from exile, to block him.

Change, and no change. Don't be surprised if we see Filipino ex-presidents, including Joseph Estrada, become more visible next year. The countdown to 2010 has begun and while I'd like to believe 2008 will bring some real changes, I'm keeping my hopes minimal. I'll be happy if the Cheaper Medicines Bill passes.

There are other things to look forward to—the UP centennial, for one, and the return of the Carillon bells.

Baby story

And the children. Indulge me as I share a little story: "Baby ip?" is the way I suggest bedtime to my 2-year-old son, using baby's English. That's usually followed by a volley of "no!" which continues as he hurdles the many rituals: a bath, brushing the teeth, a book, his bottle of water and occasional interruptions with toys, keys, the cat's tail.

The whole routine takes at least an hour, including converting my bed into a trampoline, before he begins to babble incoherently, a sign he's drifting off and that I can now carry him to his crib and tuck him in.

A few weeks ago, it happened. He was sitting on my lap having his nightcap when I dozed off, exhausted from a long day. When I woke up, I went into mild panic wondering where he was. It turned out he had gotten sleepy and climbed into his crib on his own. He was still drifting off to sleep but able to muster a smile and what I thought was a mischievous wink as he asked, "Dada ip?"

Parenting involves many such reminders that life's moving on. I tuck the kids to sleep now; in a few years, they'll probably be the ones doing it, with many more goodbyes than hellos.

The Christmas rush reminds us of more of these passages, of more senior moments for example. Last weekend I was reading my own article in the Sunday Inquirer Magazine where I talked about a Christmas "some 20 years ago." Wait a minute, I suddenly remembered, wasn't that in the 1970s, which would make it 30 years? In social science research, we call it "telescoping," when people you're interviewing recall events that they think happened recently, but actually date further back.

Yet the year-end reunions and revelry should remind us we're not dealing so much with passages than with cycles of renewal that allow us to navigate into the future, guided by the past and the present.

I'm going to end with an apology to friends. I've been very bad lately with answering e-mail and texting, partly because my batteries tend to run low more quickly and because I've been living out of the suitcase, using the Christmas break to conduct short training workshops in Vietnam and Thailand and rushing back for Christmas and the New Year.

So, I did want to use my column to thank everyone who sent in greetings, in all languages and in all moods. Here's to a new year with more cycles of constancy and change, each one taking us to exciting new heights.

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'Uncouth, thick-faced' teachers

THE LETTERS TITLED "TEACHING SIDLING" (INQUIRER, 11/29/07) and "Teachers cheat by not teaching" (INQUIRER, 12/17/07) prompted me to write this letter.

Some experiences in the past several years have confirmed my suspicion that many Filipinos no longer have a high regard for the teaching profession.

A few years ago, I was introduced at a wedding to a relatively young Quezon City councillor who went to the same private school I attended from elementary to high school. From across the table, "Mr. Konsehal" asked me what my course was. When I told him I was taking secondary education, major in English at the University of Santo Tomas, he looked at me contemptibly, saying: "What? You wanna be a teacher?"

His apparently rhetorical question silenced everyone (including his own entourage) at our table. Needless to say, I was taken aback by his failure to hide his condescending attitude. (After all, diplomatic skills are expected of politicians like him.)

I was left deeply wondering why he reacted that way. Perhaps he thought I was a masochist for wanting to teach, considering that most teachers get an awfully "pathetic" salary. Or perhaps, during his student days, he was victimized or disillusioned by his own teachers' improprieties.

How, indeed, can we teachers be seen as role models if we sell to our students "Chocnut" and "Boom-Boom lollipops" inside the classroom? How can we gain their respect if we dump money into their hands and order them to go to the canteen pronto to buy us one cup of rice at lunch time?

Do we not realize that we come off uncouth and thick-faced if we constantly "joke" to students about giving a "pakain" during their birthdays, Christmastime, graduation season, or when their OFW parents arrive from abroad? How shameful can we get to send a student on an errand to a government office to carry out a persona obligation just because our schedule prevents us from doing it ourselves?

Meanwhile, letter writers have

worried me no end with their various accounts of the unethical, unprofessional and exploitative practices of their own teachers. These "horror" stories further cheapen the image of my profession.

Certain observations made me realize that this problem boils down mostly to the teacher's upbringing, which makes it even harder to solve, for the teacher is blind to his or her own malpractices. But something must be done. All I can hope for is that the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education will address this problem. Likewise, school administrators should monitor very closely their teachers' behavior, making sure they do not abuse the considerable power they have over students. Parents as well should not be afraid to speak up against abusive teachers.

To my fellow teachers, we may unfortunately be underpaid, but that does not justify unprofessional conduct. Let's have some self-respect.

—CLAUDE LUCAS C. DESPABILADERAS,
claudelucas2003@yahoo.com

SSS' slow response due to manual verification

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO ALVIN Ribano's letter titled "SSS contributions forced investment" (INQUIRER, 11/20/07). Ribano complained about the Social Security System's slow response to his father's request for recomputation of his pension benefits.

Our Lipa City branch has confirmed that the complainant's father, Romeo T. Ribano, filed his re-

quest for pension recomputation in August this year. On Aug. 16, 2007, SSS Lipa sent an endorsement letter to SSS San Pablo branch (our South Luzon cluster's main office in Laguna). SSS San Pablo received the endorsement letter on that same day.

Edna Tanguin, head of the SSS branch in San Pablo, has requested for a manual verification of Ribano's records. The process en-

tails checking every entry of a member's records by hand. It was finished on Nov. 26, and results show a need for an adjustment.

SSS San Pablo is now communicating with Ribano to tell him about the results.

—JOEL R. PALACIOS,
assistant vice president,
Media Affairs Department,
Social Security System, QC

5th in year 2007, 54th in 7 years

FERNANDO "BATMAN" LINTUAN, the first president of the Davao Sportswriters Association and broadcaster of dxGO Aksyon Radyo, was gunned down at close range.

His death brought to five the number of journalists killed in 2007 and to 54 the number of journalists killed under the Arroyo administration.

Reports from the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines Davao Chapter stated that a gunman riding on a motorcycle shot Lintuan while on board a car that was about to leave the station. Lintuan was hit in the head.

Two other broadcasters, Louie Ceniza and Edgar Banzon were with him in the car.

Lintuan is the fifth Davao journalist to be killed since 1986. Broadcaster Jun Porras Pala was killed Sept. 6, 2003, while Narciso Balani, Rogie Zagado and Leo Palo were killed on Aug. 27, 1987—all of them were with dxRA Aksyon Radyo. Davao photojournalist Gene Boyd Lumawag, on the other hand, was in assignment in Jolo, Sulu when he was shot on Nov. 12, 2004.

The other journalists killed this year were Hermari Pastolero (Sultan Kudarat), Carmelito Palacios (Nueva Ecija), Dodie Nufiez (Cavite) and Vicente Sumalpong (Tawi-Tawi).

Lintuan left behind four children.

—ROWENA PARAAN,
executive coordinator,
Media Safety Office,
IJF-National Union of
Journalists of the Philippines
105-A Scout Castor St., QC

Bush's duplicity exposed by NIE

THE RECENT REVELATION OF the declassified National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) which confirmed that Iranian nuclear weapons development had been halted as early as 2003 has dashed the warmongering rhetoric of US President George Bush. And it should teach Washington that the world will never be safe as long as the hawks continue to hold sway at the White House.

For one, it proved Bush's critics right and further diminished the worth of US policy in inveigling the entire world to join a campaign of hate and aggression against Iran.

Second, it made Bush look silly and the caboodle of US officials boasting his tirades as nothing but nattering nabobs of nuclear blackmail.

Third, it shattered the myth that Washington bases its policies and demeanor on good old intelligence and it exposed Bush and company's incredible vice of creating a reality of their own, a solipsism that is dangerous to world peace and the lives of Iranians, Americans and all peoples on earth.

We are outraged by the insistence of US officials that their May 2005 assessment that Iran was on the verge of creating a nuclear weapon was correct in all essentials, even in the face of incontrovertible evidence that Bush and company had lied.

This is akin to Bush's insistence that the executed Saddam Hussein was guilty of harboring Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida when facts showed that Hussein hated Bin Laden and fundamentalism so much that he would have hunted fundamentalists down the way honey badgers hunt down cobras.

As the world will never be at peace if Washington will continue to insist in its version of reality and wrong policies, in utter disregard of its own intelligence.

—DR. ERICK SAN JUAN,
S-208, Manila Bank Bldg.,
6772 Ayala Ave., Makati City

Incredible praise from king of Spain

WE COULDN'T BELIEVE THE accolade and praise heaped by King Carlos I of Spain on Ms Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for her "adherence to democracy and outstanding human rights record." We wonder where His Majesty has been all this time. Was he properly briefed before heaping those unbelievable praise on Ms Arroyo?

What is outstanding in this administration? A human rights record that is worse than that of Marcos' martial law?

More than 800 cases of extrajudicial killings have claimed the lives of political activists and journalists. There are hundreds of forced disappearances. And we have seen the violent suppression of the people's basic right to

peaceably assemble and of the freedom of the press, and the continuing disregard of democratic processes in a clear attempt to hide the truth in controversies bounding the Arroyo administration. Did His Majesty praise Ms Arroyo for all these?

Maypagasa strongly urges the Spanish government and other European Union states to put pressure on this immoral government to stop it from committing more of these illegal acts. The European Union must not close its eyes and condone the anti-democratic actions being perpetrated by the Arroyo administration against the Filipino people.

—ROEL GARCIA,
spokesperson, Maypagasa,
maypagasaphil@yahoo

Can't be any better without English

THIS IS A REACTION TO THE letter "Better without English?" (INQUIRER, 12/15/07).

If deteriorating English persists, we just have to root out the decay until English becomes an efficient tool for learning. School administrators, teachers and learners themselves, share in the task of upgrading English for knowledge acquisition. Sound proposals to bring about quality English must be within the grasp of people entrusted with quality English. In addition, a constant back-up and catch-on mechanism at the administrative and instructional levels must grapple with the normal curve phenomenon of about 50 percent in a typical English classroom performing below average.

Why shove off English which occupies a notch above other Asian neighbors in literature, journals, periodicals, newspapers, textbooks, library holdings, radio broadcasts and stage presentations among others? We study English not necessarily to communicate with Filipinos since a native tongue inheres for social interaction, with a national language to boot.

Neither do we learn to speak English to communicate with foreigners in our country, nor to prepare for jobs abroad, nor to bone up for call centers. Short- and long-term goals in learning English focus on its immediate use in school and self study to reinforce knowledge that marks an educated person. Disconnected from the issues on governance and social deviations, teaching-English proponents have gone a long way with English despite its lack of fine-tuning.

The native tongue has its place for "beginning reading" in the first two grades and as a cognitive link to English comprehension. Dropouts are better off with a reading knowledge of their native tongue, which may expand to reading English. Teachers can't always bridge contrastive features between the native tongue of the Malayo-Polynesian family of languages and English of the Germanic family.

We need to keep our cool rather than plunge into the hysterics of replacing English in the academe with the native tongue and expect a surge of national development. Ditching English after counting our gains in a second language, disregarding a unified resolve to drop English in midstream; remaining unperturbed by the prerequisite resources and machinery for the language shift at a national scale, and being unmindful of the time lag to operationalize a haphazard notion constitute a crime of this generation.

Let's stand as a unique Asian nation instead—using English in school, teaching Filipino as a national language and using the native tongue in the grades without replacing English at all. Let's continue to teach and learn English with a heavy workout on proficiency, tap the native tongue as a ramp to reading and comprehension, take pride in the facile use of Filipino, our national language, and accept the dominance of the native tongue.

Let's move onward with English. Only the faint-of-heart retreat and surrender to the rub on Philippine English.

—ALICE S. GO,
Baybay, Leyte 6521

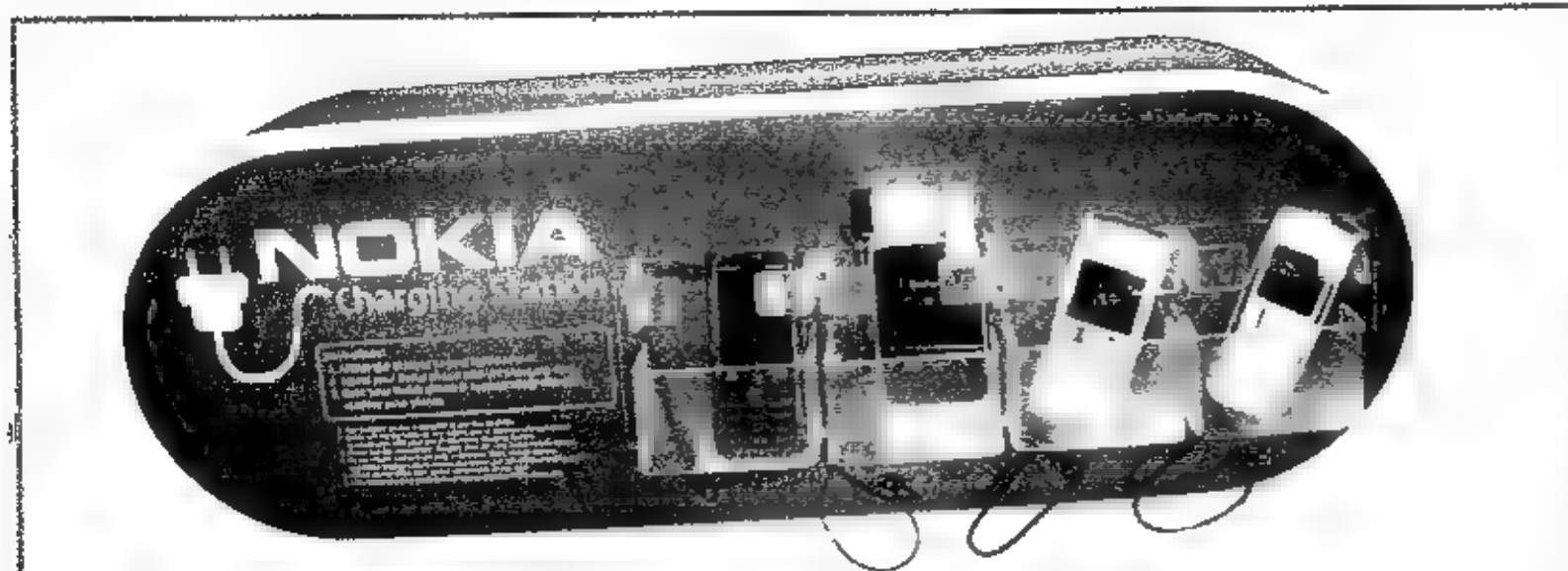
More than enough reason to resign

AGAIN ANOTHER INTERNATIONAL forum, Transparency International, listed the Philippines in the top 10 of world corruption.

This finding is not an eye-opener but a call for Ombudsman Mercedes Gutierrez and Chair Guillermo Carague of the Commission on Audit to resign for failing to stop the increasing menace of corruption in Philippine society.

As for Dr. Constanza de Guzman, chair of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC), she may be accorded the benefit of understanding; her decisions, even though meritorious, are being reversed by the Office of the President, specifically by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

—LIGORIO G.M. NAVAL,
114-B Alima,
Bacoor, Cavite



Nokia: Charging Up the Holidays

It was the nightmare before Christmas. You're lost in the middle of last-minute Christmas shopping while waiting for an important call or text message. Suddenly, your phone indicates that it's low batt. You try looking for your charger in your bag but then you remember leaving it at home. At that moment, you also realize that if even you did have your charger, you still would end up begging for a place to charge up since most establishments are not eager to share their electrical sockets.

Nokia knows that this nightmare is in-

duced an everyday reality. To address this glaring and ever-present need, it introduced a special service only here in the Philippines. As a holiday treat, Nokia came up with the Nokia Charging Station project to give back to its loyal users by keeping them charged up and connected.

The mobile

phone giant has installed over 200 Nokia Charging Stations in places where people are always on-the-go. Now everyone with a Nokia phone can charge up for free at selected Ayala Cinemas, KFC outlets, Nokia Stores, Nokia Care Centers, Smart Wireless Centers, and Wendy's branches.

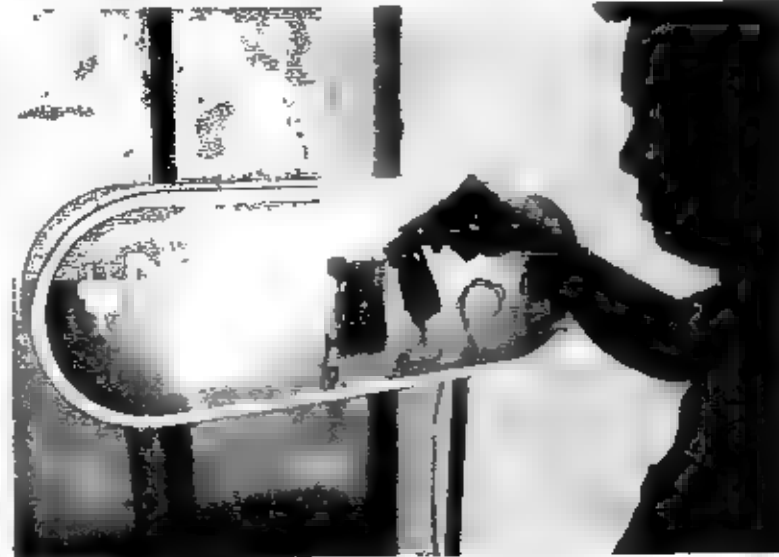
Initial reception of the Nokia charging stations has been extremely encouraging. Those who have experienced its convenience consider it a lifesaver and seek it out whenever their battery meters run low.

"It's very helpful, especially for people like me who are always on the road. Like yesterday, I went to Wendy's to charge up my phone and eat something while waiting," says Alex Betonio.

"I was in Greenbelt 3 cinema and my phone's battery was almost totally drained. Good thing there was a charging station so I was able to charge up and receive an important call from my mom," adds Abby Espiritu.

The innovative mobile phone company plans to install more charging stations nationwide and team up with more partners. Soon, more people may charge up their mobile phones while enjoying their favorite cafes and restaurants. The idea of being cut off from the rest of the world because of a dead battery may even be relegated to the ghost of Christmas past.

Staying connected. Now, that's a gift worth having.



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Ping seeks probe of Asean meet deals

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. in Manila
and Jolene R. Bulambot, Inquirer Visayas

SEN. PANFILO "PING" LACSON WILL FILE TODAY a Senate resolution seeking an immediate investigation of the P3.5 billion in government money "squandered" for the overpriced construction of the Cebu International Convention Center (CICC) which was rushed for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit last January.

"This is part of my promise during my campaign in Cebu not to let this glaring robbery of the nation's money just pass," said Lacson in a text message to reporters.

Lacson said the CICC alone was overpriced by at least P500 million not to mention the P500 million spent for decorative lampposts and P83 million for closed circuit television cameras (CCTV) that did not work.

Lacson was reacting to a call by Cebu businessman Crisologo Saavedra who sought the senator's help to look into the anomalous transactions that he claimed were facilitated through negotiated contracts and selective bidding conducted by Cebu officials led by Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia.

In Cebu City, a regional trial court judge yesterday ordered the arrest of a Cebuano broadcaster and columnist accused of libel for allegedly maligning in his column the reputation of Governor Garcia.

Judge Gerakine Econg, presiding judge of RTC Branch 9 issued on Thursday an arrest warrant against Leo Lastimosa, columnist of local daily The Freeman and station manager of dyAB of ABS-CBN.

The judge ordered the chief of the warrant and subpoena section of the Cebu City police to arrest Lastimosa and to submit a report in 10 days. A bail of P10,000 was set in the information.

The information of libel against Lastimosa said that the statements in his column induced readers to think that Garcia, in hosting the 12th Asean summit, was directly responsible for the monumental expenses incurred by the government, including the construction of the CICC.

Garcia also accused Lastimosa of maligning her reputation in his column.

She claimed that Lastimosa's column dated April 14, 2007 was malicious and false, exposing her to public hatred and contempt. Econg told the INQUIRER that she found probable cause for the charges against Lastimosa, prompting her to issue a warrant of arrest despite the petition for review filed by Lastimosa before the Department of Justice.

Slain UN worker remembered for selflessness

MOGPOG, MARINDUQUE—AMID THE drizzle, the family and friends of Gene Luna, the United Nations World Food Program (UN-WFP) Filipino finance officer killed in a bombing in Algeria last Dec. 11, bid their final farewell to her past noon Wednesday at the Mogpog Municipal Cemetery.

Alghassim Wurie, deputy country director of the UN-WFP Philippines, said Luna is best remembered for her friendliness, love, concern and selflessness.

"She is a true colleague, a sister to everybody who gives her best in everything she does. Because of this, she is mourned by the whole WFP worldwide," said Wurie.

He said Luna could have survived the bomb blast had she thought of her safety first.

Instead of saving herself after the first blast, Luna checked to see if her colleagues were safe.

Unfortunately, another bomb went off and a portion of the building where they were working collapsed and pinned Luna and some of her coworkers to death.

Wurie also recalled that in the UN and the humanitarian workers' circle, Luna was best remembered for her courage and alertness.

Dr. Homer Montoya, dean of the graduate school of the Marinduque State College and a childhood friend of Luna, said Luna sacrificed her life to serve others. **Gerald Gene R. Querubin, Inquirer Southern Luzon**

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NEWSBRIEFS

Korean couple slain

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—A Korean couple and two men were murdered in separate incidents in Porac, Pampanga, on Wednesday and on Christmas Day, police said. Security guard Danilo Macalimpas reported finding the bodies of Oh Young-kwan, 38, and his wife, Lee Hyan-koung, near their house in Go Ytang Village in Barangay Manibaug Para-aya at past 7 a.m. Dec. 26.

Police said Oh had bullet wounds on his left cheek while Lee was shot in the head. Pampanga police chief Senior Supt. Keith Singlan had ordered a search for the couple's driver that the neighbors said had not reported for work in the last four days.

Also in Porac, Marino Arceo, 41, and his helper, Renato Guiao, 25, were shot dead inside the New Trends Barber Shop in Barangay Cangatba on Tuesday. Police found five spent shells from a .45 cal. gun and an M-16 rifle in the barbershop owned by Arceo.

Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

Dengue up in E. Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—Eastern Visayas registered an increase in dengue fever cases in 2007, the Department of Health regional office disclosed.

The data of the DOH regional epidemiology and surveillance unit (Resu) showed that the region had 1,162 dengue cases with eight deaths from the mosquito-borne disease in 2007. This figure was much higher than the 355 dengue cases and one death reported in 2006.

Regional health office records showed that Leyte registered in 2007 the highest number of dengue fever cases at 647, which was more than double the province's 239 cases recorded last year.

Biliran had the lowest at 22 cases but had only six cases in 2006.

Joey A. Gabieta, Inquirer Visayas

Cop execs face probe

DJIMAGLETE CITY—Some members of the Philippine National Police and police station chiefs in Negros Oriental face investigation for their possible involvement as participants or protectors of illegal gambling.

PNP provincial director Senior Supt. Melvin Ramon Buenafe said they have seen "some indicators from evidence recovered during some raids" that a number of officers and policemen could be involved in illegal gambling operation that rides on the Sweetres Lotto.

Sweetres Lotto is a government-sponsored numbers game drawn every night, in which the winning combination is based on three numbers from zero to nine.

Romy Amaraño, Inquirer Visayas



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Salug folk finally able to say hello to Graham Bell

From page A1

June, when her science teacher took the class on a field trip to Dipolog City. She says she was thrilled when she heard a voice on the other end of the line.

Dipolog, only 100 km away, is light years ahead of Salug when it comes to communications.

Fax messages

That's where Mayor Jesus Lim of Salug used to get his facsimile message of greetings from Malacana up until a year ago.

This year, some bright boys in the municipality decided it was time to activate the dead TSB lines, says Fortunata Postigo, equipment operator of the Department of Transportation and Communications assigned in Salug.

Workers cleaned up TSB equipment covered with moss, dust and rust and got replacements for parts that had been vandalized.

Experts from the DOTC in its Western Mindanao branch upgraded the system and came up with a proposal to offer the TSB to household subscribers.

Before approving the proposal, DOTC regional director Mito-on Ibra consulted local and town officials and officially launched a

fixed line utilizing a wireless terminal system for household subscribers for an initial fee of P1,900 for local calls and an additional P3,000 National Direct Dialing or NDD.

Few takers

However, only local government officials, businessmen and well-to-do families can afford the rates, Postigo says, defeating the purpose of the TSB, envisioned as a facility for the rural poor. Few can afford the monthly fee of P250.

The wireless terminal and repeaters also could only serve 40 subscribers within reach of the communications tower in Barangay Poblacion.

Lim is satisfied despite the limitations. "At least we no longer have to subscribe to telegram or send people to pick faxed messages from Dipolog town," he says.

Postigo said all the facilities of TSB had already been put to good use by recycling towers, terminals and other cables.

Outdated system

The TSB system is outdated. It can only be used using coins or phone cards. "You cannot receive calls, just outgoing calls," says Postigo.

When the system was officially turned over

to the village officials in 2000, barangay officials refused to own up the responsibility even though they were promised a set of phone and revenue for the community, Postigo says.

Postigo says the TSB system and its units ended up as "a child's toy."

In Dumanog, Mayor Edgardo Jamero questions the installation of orange-colored TSB booths, which he calls "orange elephants."

Phones never rang

Jamero says the national government had embarked on a multimillion-dollar telecommunication project way back in 1999 up to 2004 "with minimal impact to the local communities and not one hundred percent operational."

The Commission on Information and Communication Technology claims to have installed a total of 8,810 units of telephone lines in the provinces of Quezon, Negros Oriental, Lanao del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya and Misamis Occidental from 1998 to 2002.

In its website, the CICT claimed that "all the systems are now operational in provincial levels."

Not in Salug. The TSB phones never rang, until stopgap measures were initiated by desperate villagers.

Phone equipment worth \$200M rusting ...

From page A1

subject to legislative scrutiny, although Congress has the power of the purse.

Foreign loan amortization is automatically included in the annual national budget, without debate, so that foreign-funded projects are presented pretty much as a fait accompli. The practice has resulted in all sorts of abuses.

The TSB project was conceived under a 1989 law and implemented by a succession of administrations from Corason Aquino, through Fidel Ramos, Joseph Estrada and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The plan, to be carried out in four phases at a time when cellular phones were coming into vogue during the dotcom revolution, was to hook up 20,000 barangays with the rest of the country using land lines and telephone booths, says former Sen. Serge Osmeña.

The expense for the facility in each barangay was P5 million for a whopping overall cost of P100 billion, says Osmeña.

The project was never fully implemented and was shelved following the dissolution in 2000 of the Municipal Telephone Project Office (MTPO), the agency tasked to implement it.

Even in areas where lines have been laid down and telephones installed, there is no dial tone.

At the time the project was abandoned, an estimated P53 billion (\$1.1 billion) had gone down the drain.

"It is 100 percent wasted," says Osmeña. And because the government is still paying for unused equipment, he says, "that's an even worse form of corruption ... it's a continuing scam."

Osmeña had opposed the project, albeit unsuccessfully, during annual budget hearings and the investigation conducted by the Senate blue ribbon committee in 2000.

He also fought but failed to stop the continuing practice of allocating automatically in the annual national budget the amortization of foreign loans contracted by the government without congressional consent.

Transportation and Communications Assistant Secretary Lorenzo Formoso III, explaining why the TSB project failed, says that it never got the required budgetary support from Congress for maintenance and upgrading of equipment in recent years and had to be mothballed.

"It was also overtaken by the rapid changes in information technology," says Formoso. He says by the time the project was up and running, equipment had become obsolete. "People were already using cell phones."

The TSB project went off the radar screen, until the \$329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) controversy broke out this year with allegations of overpricing and bribery.

Ms Arroyo later scrapped the contract with China's ZTE Corp. to be financed out of a concessional loan for 20 years with a 3-percent interest and a five-year grace period.

It was the first time that a Chinese concessional loan had been scrapped anywhere in the world, say sources in Beijing's embassy in Manila. They deny reports that the loan was tied and that ZTE was imposed on Manila.

"The Philippine government has full control of the project," says one source.

Still, the DOTC says it is pursuing the project, perhaps using another financing mode, to wire the nation's bureaucracy digitally and flesh out the administration's vision of a "cyber-corridor" that will transform the nation into an information technology powerhouse in the region.

Dismal track record

In the midst of the NBN scandal, the INQUIRER received an "aide memoire" outlining examples of the government's dismal track record in its telecommunications ventures, including the TSB fiasco.

"Publicly owned backbones/networks are not within the core competence of the government," says the document.



THESE stacks of documents were presented to the Senate during the investigation of the controversial Telepono sa Barangay project in 2000.

It says the DOTC has not demonstrated its ability to operate, maintain, repair and provide continuing funding for telecommunications projects.

"The first satellite-based broadband network was installed at the Office of the Press Secretary. The heat-sensitive equipment required air-conditioned rooms 24 hours/day, which the government was not able to provide. It is barely used and expensive to maintain. No funds have been allotted for its repair and maintenance," the paper says.

"The (TSB) was supposed to link all barangays nationwide through telephone services. The project was never completed, and around \$200 million worth of equipment are rotting and rusting in two Metro Manila warehouses, where the government continues to pay rent," it says.

Overprice

Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza and other top DOTC officials confirmed the report on the TSB equipment stockpile, but attempts by the INQUIRER to look into the warehouses and their contents have gone nowhere.

An official of the DOTC's Telecommunications Office, who requested anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media, says the department secured thousands of telephone units after the MTPO closed shop. However, only 538 units were actually used, he says, and the rest could not be accounted for.

Allegations of overpricing have been raised since the program to provide telephone facilities in impoverished regions in Mindanao and the Visayas and the Sierra Madre and Cordillera mountain regions on Luzon began. (See Timeline on Page A14)

Phase I of the project started in October 1998 and was to have been completed in August 2004. It called for the establishment of 2,460 telephone lines in 246 barangays in Negros Oriental, Lanao del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya and Misamis Oriental.

Phone cards

Each barangay was to get at least three pay phones using phone cards for outgoing calls and one plain and ordinary telephone set for incoming calls. Villagers would have to go to the cities to buy phone cards to be able to use the telephones. For many, this meant travelling long distances.

Total project cost of Phase I was P1.5 billion, including a foreign loan component of \$24.99 million from the Export Development Corp. of Canada.

The website of the Commission on Information and Communications Technology (CICT) gives details of three phases of the project that called for the setting up of close to 9,000 telephone lines in 2,261 barangays from October 1998 to December 2002.

CICT, which used to be under the Office of the President before its functions were transferred to the DOTC, says completion rate was 15 percent to 100 percent.

None of these facilities are working now.

The CICT funding report was fuzzy. Through the years, about a dozen suppliers contracts were signed. Some of them were scrapped following claims of overpricing and others were renegotiated and scaled down.

The initial plans were so fancy that the

blueprint included housing telephones in buildings with a toilet and other amenities and the construction of access roads.

Cost per telephone line ranged anywhere from around \$11,000 to \$33,000 although some private contractors had said at that time this could even be reduced to as low as \$800 to \$1,500.

Osmeña recalls that he was so incensed during budget hearings when he learned about proposed outlays and gave DOTC officials a hard time. Nothing came out of the blue ribbon inquiry.

"No final report was issued. Other members of the committee simply stonewalled," Osmeña says.

How did the proponents of the measure get away with it?

Silence of the graveyard

"The justifications of TSB project in the Senate were wonderful to hear," says Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. when legislation was being debated. "Good words, we are never at a loss ... After that, silence at the TSB front. Dreadful silence. The silence of the graveyard."

"The jaded bureaucracy and the even jaded legislature need to be jolted into realizing that there is life even after corrupt deals—life behind bars, I hope, for the corrupt private contractors and their patrons in public offices," says Pimentel.

Roxas says no planning went into the project.

"Even without considering the allegations of corruption, the project itself could not succeed in its goal of bringing practical and efficient communication, as the basic infrastructure such as telephone lines had not been deliberated properly," Roxas says.

Deal gone sour

Mayor Jesus Lim of Salug town in Zamboanga says 92 units of the TSB orange colored booths were set up in 23 barangays in his municipality in 2000. Not one of them is working now. Lim says they are nothing more than "souvenirs" of a deal gone sour.

He referred to the DOTC's plan to revive the broadband plan and pursue the "last mile" connectivity.

"We need to be informed, explained and consulted first with this NBN. We've got some lessons and we don't want the funds to go to waste again, like these orange elephants."

Adds Mayor Edgardo Jamero of Dumanog in Zamboanga del Sur: "It's like a done deal. People from the telecommunications office just approached our office giving the list of barangays as recipients of the project. Not a single consultation was done."

Sixto Lagala, a 65-year-old farmer, says that at Barangay Kayok in Lilo, Zamboanga del Norte, a telephone line worked for about a month following its inauguration in 2000. Villagers were allowed to use it for free.

"They told us to get a card, but there were no phone cards for sale," says Lagala. The phone booth went out of commission shortly thereafter.irate residents later tore down the machine.

If it's any consolation, at least this village was able to use the telephone for at least a month. Those units in two Manila warehouses never saw the light of day and are simply rusting away. With reports from Rixa Olchondra and Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao



NAIRUDDIN

Maalon, 6, tells the INQUIRER that his father had told him the phones in their village were installed on the day he was born.

Timeline: Telepono sa Barangay

1997—The Ramos administration signs a \$57-million deal for the "Telepono sa Barangay" (TSB) project with Alcatel Espana (which priced each telephone line at \$33,173.21—roughly P1.3 million), the French unit of Lucent Technologies (which charged \$20,256.11 per line), and the Canadian firm SR Telecoms (\$18,998.64 per line).

The TSB project aims to provide basic telecommunications services to selected barangays in Quezon, Negros Oriental, Lanao del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya and Misamis Occidental.

The barangays are provided each with at least three pay phones using phone cards for outgoing calls and one plain and ordinary telephone set (POTS) for incoming calls.

1998—Then Municipal Telephone Project Office (MTPO) project director and Undersecretary Enrico Velasco presents the TSB project in Congress.

He says the cost of installing the phones in the provinces will reach \$11,000 per line. Each one will have a building of its own, with a comfort room, access roads, and other amenities.

TSB is implemented.

Oct. 5, 1998—Construction of TSB Phase I begins.

October 1999—President Joseph Estrada authorizes the MTPO to finalize the following contracts: Phase IV-A, Telemobile Inc. of the United States, \$108 million; Phase V, Ericsson Telecoms AB of Sweden, \$100 million; Phase VI, Italtel SpA of Italy, \$200 million; Phase VII, Tomen Corp. of Japan, approximately \$126.9 million; Phase VIII, Siemens AG of Germany, \$102.5 million; Phase IX, Siemens Atea of Belgium, approximately \$71.8 million.

Phase X, Heesung Cable of Korea, \$160 million; and, Phase XII, Fibercom/ECI Telecoms Inc. of Israel, \$100 million.

Dec. 23, 1999—Construction of TSB Phase IA begins.

Feb. 3, 2000—Estrada announces that he will scrap the TSB project because of the allegedly overpriced contracts.

Feb. 8, 2000—The MTPO Project Management Office is dissolved.

Feb. 10, 2000—The Economic Coordinating Council, which Estrada ordered to review other contracts signed during the Ramos administration, decides to honor the contracts, apparently after the contract prices were brought down following renegotiations.

Jan. 11, 2001—TSB Phase II completes 15 percent, with a total of 2,613 telephone lines set up in 745 barangays of the Cordillera Administrative Region.

This Phase faced the following problems—the dissolution of the MTPO, the non-availability of peso allocation, and the expiration of the loan agreement with Credit de France/Standard Chartered Bank.

This Phase still awaits completion. It has so far cost the government P1.57 billion.

Dec. 23, 2002—TSB Phase IA is completed, costing P5.3 billion. A total of 6,350 telephone lines were installed in 1,270 barangays in Quezon, Lanao del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya and Misamis Occidental.

August 2004—TSB Phase I is completed. A total of 2,460 telephone lines were installed in 246 barangays in Quezon, Negros Oriental, Lanao del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya, and Misamis Occidental. The project cost: P1.54 billion. Eliza Victoria, Inquirer Research

Palparan: There's no such policy; those are only perceptions

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

RETIRED MAJ. GEN. JOVITO PALPARAN said he had no policy of encouraging his men to abduct civilians suspected of being insurgents without due process and sufficient basis.

"Wala paanong may policy na ganyan? Perceptions lang nila yan (There's none. How can there be such a policy? Those are only their perceptions)," he said, referring to leftists.

He said human rights-related cases in the courts were "part of a continuing propaganda to pin us down."

"They're using me as an example para takutin ang mga heneral (to scare the generals). They want to tie down the AFP so that the succeeding officers would melt down or lie low," he said.

Of the court's order for the military to produce documents on the Manalo brothers' detention, Palparan said:

"How can I or the military produce documents when there is no detention?"

Palparan said he neither knew nor met Raymond and Reynaldo Manalo in Bulacan in February 2006.

"Hindi. Sinasabi lang nila yan. Hindi ko kilala ang mga yan (No. They're only claiming that. I don't know them)," he said.

Palparan retired on Sept. 11, 2006 when he reached the mandatory retirement age of 56. His last stint was as chief of the Army's 7th Infantry Division, which has command over six battalions in Central Luzon's seven provinces.

The human rights group Karapatan had counted 71 victims of summary executions, five victims of massacres, 14 victims of frustrated killings and 46 forced disappearances during Palparan's one-year stint in Central Luzon.

The Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya reported that five of their leaders, mostly in Bataan, were killed

in the same period.

Praise from President

Despite being branded a "berdugo" (butcher), Palparan has consistently earned praise from the Arroyo administration for his supposed exemplary performance in counterinsurgency.

In her State of the Nation Address in 2006, Ms. Arroyo praised Palparan, saying he "will not back down until the darkness of terror gives way to the dawn of freedom."

In 2004, he was sent to lead the Philippine military contingent assigned to conduct civic and medical operations in Iraq after his stint in Mindoro. That year, he was promoted to the rank of major general and appointed Army chief of staff.

In 2005, he was assigned chief of the 8th Infantry Division based in Eastern Visayas, where he was accused of being behind nearly 200 cases of killings,

disappearances, harassment, torture, and other rights violations.

Later in the year, he was relieved and transferred to head the 7th ID in Fort Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija. Within a month, 13 leaders and members of party-list group Bayan Muna and its affiliate organizations in Central Luzon were reported killed.

Melo Commission

Saying he left behind a "trail of blood or bodies in his wake wherever he was assigned," the Melo Commission report named Palparan "the prime suspect behind the extrajudicial killings" in the country, adding there was "circumstantial" evidence linking Palparan to the killings of leftists.

The commission was formed by Ms. Arroyo in August 2006 in response to a clamor from several quarters, including the European Union, for the Philippine government to look into the

deaths of activists.

Early this year, Palparan tried but failed to get a congressional seat as the No. 1 nominee of party-list group Bantay.

Two missing UP students

He was also recently included as one of the respondents in the writ of amparo filed in October by Erlinda Cadapan and Concepcion Empeño, mothers of the two missing students of the University of the Philippines Sheryl Cadapan and Karen Empeño, who were purportedly kidnapped by the military in June 2006.

Born on Sept. 11, 1950 in Cagayan de Oro, Palparan grew up in his father's hometown in Malibog, Southern Leyte.

He completed a bachelor's degree in business administration at the University of the East in Manila in 1971, and about two decades later, a master's degree in national security administration at the National Defense College of the Philippines. *Inquirer Research*

Court says Palparan knew of abductions

From page A1

praised Palparan in her State of the Nation Address last year for his relentless campaign against insurgents.

In the decision, the appellate court granted several of the remedies sought by the Manalo brothers in their petition for amparo, including the release of reports and medical records concerning them, but denied others such as a broad protection order against all military officials.

The writ of amparo requires respondents—whether government officials or agencies, or private individuals—to take action to resolve a grievance and not merely deny the allegations against them.

TRO from Supreme Court

The Manalo brothers earlier sought protection from the Supreme Court shortly after their escape in August from their captors. The high court then issued a temporary restraining order (TRO) stopping the defense secretary, the Armed Forces chief of staff and their agents from arresting or violating the rights of the brothers. The TRO is still in effect.

About two months after the TRO was issued, the brothers converted their petition in the Supreme Court into one for a writ of amparo, and the high court directed the Court of Appeals to hear the brothers' plea.

There was no question that the Manalo brothers were abducted in their house in San Ildefonso, Bulacan, on Feb. 14, 2006, and detained at various places until their escape, the appellate court said.

The court said it was convinced that the Manalo brothers were abducted because they were suspected of being members or sympathizers of the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

This was because their captors had been looking for a certain Ka Bestre, who turned out to be the Manalos' brother, Rolando.

Palparan met with Raymond

The court said Palparan knew the Manalo brothers were being detained by his men.

It also pointed out that neither Palparan nor other military personnel had contradicted the brothers' claim that Palparan had met with Raymond in a Bulacan safe house and issued statements about what he wanted Raymond and the latter's parents to do.

"General Palparan's participation in the abduction was also established. At the very least, he was aware of the petitioners' captivity at the hands of men in uniform assigned to his command (His) direct and personal role in the abduction might not have been shown but his knowledge of the dire situation of the petitioners during their long captivity at the hands of the military personnel under his command bespoke of his indubitable command policy that unavoidably encouraged and not merely tolerated the abduction of civilians without due process of law and without probable cause," it said.

Provost Marshal's superficial effort

The appellate court described as "superficial" the military's effort to look into the Manalos' abduction, pointing out that the Provost Marshal of the 7th Infantry Division only focused on the "one-sided version" of the Cagay auxiliaries involved, when he should have interviewed the Manalos and assured them of evenhanded justice.

Even if Palparan had retired by the time the probe took place, the military command should still have subjected him to questioning to determine his liability, the court said.

"In this connection, therefore, the investigation of the abduction and forced disappearance of the petitioners for a long period of time, from Feb. 14, 2006, until Aug. 13, 2007, undertaken by the AFP [Armed Forces of the Philippines] High Command should have been more comprehensive and not left to the Provost Marshal who was obviously holding his punches (assuming he threw any).

"True, General Palparan has since retired from the active military service, but we do not think that he was immune from inquiry or investigation or that he was exempt from any personal liability, if warranted. At the very least,



PALPARAN

JOAN SONDOK

General Palparan and his men, especially those of the latter who are still in the active service of the AFP, should have been subjected to a more intense investigation," the court said.

The military had contended that the Manalos were abducted as a result of a feud with a family surnamed Mendoza because the elder brother of Raymond and Reynaldo had been accused of killing the Mendoza patriarch.

Produce records

In its decision, the appellate court directed Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro and AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon to:

- Give the court and the Manalos within five days the "official and unofficial reports" of the investigation conducted in connection with the case

- Produce the medical reports, records and charts of any treatment and medicine given or prescribed to the brothers, as well as a list of military personnel who attended to them during their detention.

(This was in light of Raymond's claim that Palparan made him take a drug called "Aive," which made him more open to suggestion. The court also found that there was torture "of some degree" committed on the brothers and that their captors allowed certain persons to minister to their injuries from the torture.)

- Confirm in writing the places where MSgt. Ruzal Hilario and Donald Caigas are officially assigned. They are among those the brothers earlier tagged as their abductors.

The court said it was established that Hilario was the one who drove the vehicle used to transfer the brothers from one place to another.

It noted that Hilario was among four master sergeants Palparan talked to when the latter directed Raymond to take the medicine, and that the brothers saw Hilario take part in the torture.

Beyond Esperon's control

The court, however, noted that Palparan was already beyond the control of Teodoro and Esperon in connection with the Manalos' request for the confirmation of the whereabouts of military officers named respondents in their earlier habeas corpus case.

The appellate court also said it could not issue the order sought by the Manalos to restrain Teodoro, Esperon and people under their command from approaching, communicating or placing them under surveillance.

Though it understood the brothers' fears for their safety, such an order would be too broad and would be tantamount to castigating the entire military organization "for the mistakes committed by the misguided few," the court said.

With regard to the Manalos' request for an order to inspect several military camps where they had been kept at one time or another, the appellate court said the brothers were already free and there was no pressing need to grant the request as it would serve no practical purpose.

"It is respectfully opined that the need to inspect should be timely raised in the proceedings that may be commenced before the proper forum to prosecute those responsible for the abduction and captivity," it said.

The court also denied the brothers' request for a list of the names, pictures and contact addresses of all organic military personnel assigned to the 7th Infantry Division, 24th Infantry Battalion and 69th Infantry Battalion.

It said the list would not solve any

IN THE KNOW

Justice Lucas Bersamin

ABRA-BORN JUSTICE LUCAS Bersamin, 58, was appointed to the Court of Appeals by President Macapagal-Arroyo on March 10, 2003.

After finishing high school at St. Joseph Seminary in Bangue, Abra, in 1965, he went to the University of the Philippines-Diliman and graduated in 1968 with a bachelor's degree in Political Science.

He took up law in the University of the East, completing his course in 1973 and placing ninth in the bar examinations of that year.

He practiced law from 1974 as a member of the Purugganan, Lizardo and Bersamin Law Office until his appointment by President Corason Aquino in November 1986 as judge of the Regional Trial Court, Branch 96, in Quezon City.

Bersamin was then only 37, making him the youngest RTC judge in Metro Manila.

In 2000, the Chief Justice Fred Ruiz Castro Memorabilia Commission awarded Bersamin the Best Decision in Civil Law and the Best Decision in Criminal Law based on the recommendations of two separate and independent judging committees made up of incumbent and retired members of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals and the Sandiganbayan.

It was the first time the same judge won in the two categories the same year. The feat has not been equaled.

In 2002, he was recognized by the Foundation for Judicial Excellence as Outstanding RTC Judge, earning him the Chief Justice Jose Abad Santos Award for Judicial Excellence. *Eliza Victoria, Inquirer Research*

matter relevant to the case and would compromise the personnel's safety, adding that not all military personnel were involved in the abduction.

"Besides, there is an overriding need to insulate the integrity of the AFP commands from being weakened through unnecessary disclosure of the identities of their personnel and assets," the court said.

Bounty for killer of Lintuan now P1M

From page A1

ing the investigation, a taxi driver, who figured in an altercation with Lintuan on Nov. 28, appeared before them to deny involvement in the killing of the broadcaster.

Tito Tabanao Jr. said he was worried, especially after his brush with Lintuan was mentioned in news reports.

"My wife asked me to come and clear my name. I was also worried be-

cause I don't want to be implicated," he said.

Tabanao said he apologized to Lintuan on Nov. 30.

"I went to his office in dxGO and I apologized for not picking up a passenger. It was really not my intention but I had a previous commitment at the time," Tabanao said.

He said Lintuan had forgiven him and even wrote a note for the Land Transportation Office, which was hear-

ing the case against him.

Nograles said he hoped that the additional bounty would encourage more witnesses to surface and help solve the crime.

So far, authorities have found one witness, a 9-year-old boy.

PO3 Jeffrey Bangcas, lead investigator of the Sta. Ana police precinct, said the boy had provided the police with information, including what one of the suspects looked like.

"The boy also said that one of the perpetrators even asked him what time Lintuan would come out of the station," Bangcas said.

Victoria Lintuan-Reyes, Ferdie's eldest sister, said she was patiently waiting for the results of the investigation.

The Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) said the arrest of the gunman could pave the way for the identification of the mastermind.

"Extrajudicial killings will not stop until we get the perpetrators, the hired killer and the mastermind," Dante Jimenez of the VACC told reporters at Lintuan's wake here yesterday.

"Again, we urgently call on law enforcement agencies to fast-track the investigation to track down the killer of Ferdie Lintuan. We hope this case will not end up like the previous cases of murdered journalists—unsolved and forgotten," he said.

Nene slams ethnic slur on Visayans in Juday movie

From page A1

The movie, written and directed by Jose Javier Reyes and produced by Star Cinema, is one of the top grossing movies in the ongoing 33rd Metro Manila Film Festival.

Sen. Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. said the scene "smacks of an ethnic slur" and "offends the sensibilities of the Visayans and other non-Tagalog speaking citizens."

In the movie, a grandmother, played by Gloria Diaz, scolds the nanny of her 4-year-old grandchild by saying: "Bakit pinapalaki ninyong Bisaya ang apo ko? (Why are you bringing up my grandchild as a Bisaya?)"

The child's mother, played by Santos, butts in and tells the nanny:

"Speak to the kid in Tagalog. Para Pinoy. (So he grows up Pinoy)."

Pimentel said the conversation was "insensitive" and "arrogant" and called on the Lopez-owned Star Cinema to apologize and delete the scene from the movie.

Thank you, sir

Reyes, the director of "Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo," said he was thankful Pimentel went "out of his way to watch 'SSS' and for being supportive of the movie industry."

"I wish he would also watch the movies of Senators (Ramon Revilla Jr. and Jinggoy Estrada, his peers in the Senate)," Reyes, who also wrote the movie script, told the Inquirer yesterday. "After that, magpahinga na siya (he should rest). With the country's

many problems, I'm sure he'll be really busy after the holidays."

Pimentel, who was acting on numerous complaints from viewers offended by the purported slur, said: "The film is conveying a wrong message to Filipinos by denigrating the use of the Visayan language, which is most widely spoken in the Visayas and large parts of Mindanao. It offends the sensibilities of the Visayans and other non-Tagalog speaking citizens by making them feel they are less Filipino than the Tagalogs. It creates useless hatred in the nation."

OTTED movie

Pimentel also slammed the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) for failing to spot the derogatory

remark while reviewing the film.

He added: "The Tagalog [always] joke about how the Bisaya speak Filipino and English with a funny accent. That's fine, we can live with that but to come out in the open and say that the only real Pinoy is those who speak Tagalog is wrong."

Offensive scene

Pimentel said Filipinos, both Tagalog and Bisaya, should be outraged at the film's ethnic slur. "It should elicit the same, if not a louder howl of protest [than the one brought against] American television series 'Desperate Housewives' wherein one of the characters made remarks maligning Filipino health professionals."

In the episode, aired in the United

States on Sept. 30, character Susan Mayer, played by actress Teri Hatcher, told her doctor: "OK, before we go any further, can I check those diplomas? Because I would just like to make sure they are not from some med school in the Philippines."

Malacañang said the remark was tantamount to a racial slur and asked the show's producers to apologize to Filipino medical professionals for putting them down.

Consequently, ABC television network, which airs the TV series, agreed to delete the offensive scene from all digital platforms and even sought a dialogue with protesting Filipino-American groups in the United States. *With a report from Marinel Cruz*



COMMUNICATIONS INFORMATION

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TRANSACTIONS

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Bureau of Internal Revenue
BIR Compound, BIR Road, Diliman, 0820 Quezon City

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Registration Database Clean Up -
STRATEGIC VALIDATION SERVICES
OF TAXPAYERS' REGISTRATION

(For the clean-up of the Taxpayer Registration Database by minimizing, if not totally eradicating, the stop filer cases, in line with this, the required manpower service will be outsourced to assist BIR in reducing the number of stop filer cases and at the same time assist the team in the implementation of the reform program.)

Loan No. 7431-PH

- The Government of the Philippines (GOP) has received a Loan from the World Bank through the National Program Support for Tax Administration Reform Project (NPSTAR) Fund to cover the cost of the Tax Compliance Component and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan to payments under the contract for the Registration Database Clean Up STRATEGIC VALIDATION SERVICES OF TAXPAYERS' REGISTRATION / BAC-TRA Bidding No. 2006-01.
- The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the procurement of the service mentioned above to sustain a clean and accurate registration database, to validate physical existence of inactive taxpayers, to validate operation/non-operation of unregistered taxpayers, and to assist the Tax Reform Administration Group (TRAG) in the preparation and evaluation of documents necessary for the effective implementation of the BIR Reform Agenda. Delivery of the SERVICE is required within one (1) month from issuance of Notice to Proceed (NTP). The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents. Instructions to Bidders (ITB).
- The procurement will be conducted through the government open competitive procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria specified under the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of the Republic Act No. 9164 (R.A. 9164), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, with some amendments as stated in these Bidding Documents and is restricted to Filipino citizens or sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to RA 5183 and subject to Commonwealth Act 128. Only bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents. The bidder with the lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
- The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) is Six Million Pesos (P 6,000,000.00). Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.
- Interested Bidders may obtain further information from BIR thru the BAC-TRA Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM, on working days from Mondays to Fridays.
- A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon cash payment to the BIR Cashier of a non-refundable fee in the amount of P 5,000.00. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
- The BIR will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on January 11, 2008, 2:00pm at the Executive Conference Room, 3rd Floor, National Office Building, BIR Compound, BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
- Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before January 23, 2008, 2:00 pm. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form and amount (or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency) as stated in Section 22.1 of the Bid Data Sheet (BDS). Late Bids shall not be accepted.
- Bid opening shall be on January 23, 2008, 2:00 pm at the Executive Conference Room, 3rd Floor National Office Building, BIR Compound, BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
- The BIR assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid. The BIR also reserves the right to reject any or all bids and accept the bids most advantageous to the government.
- The BIR reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE
Victoria V. Santos
Assistant Commissioner-ASOS
Chair, Bids and Awards Committee
For Tax Reform Administration (BAC-TRA)
Rm. 306, 3rd Floor
Revenue Computer Center (RCC) Building,
BIR Compound, BIR Road, Diliman 0820 Quezon City
Tel No. (02) 981-7077/Fax No. (02) 928-3235
e-mail addresses: bac-tra@bir.gov.ph,
lilibeth.maraman@bir.gov.ph
Webster: www.bir.gov.ph

(Sgd.) VICTORIA V. SANTOS
Assistant Commissioner-ASOS
Chair, BAC-TRA

(PDI - December 28, 2007)

A18

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
METRO

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2007

Resort owner killed in QC

By Jeannette I. Andrade

A 38-YEAR-OLD OWNER OF A travel lodge in the popular resort town of Boracay was killed by a lone gunman Wednesday evening in Quezon City.

His 9-year-old adopted daughter was also hurt in the

incident. Ricky Sacapano of Block 1, Lot 7, Sto. Niño Street, Greenfields 3 Subdivision, Barangay San Agustin, in Novaliches, died instantly from gunshots in the head and body.

His daughter Bianca was hit by a stray bullet in the right palm and was taken to the Que-

zon City General Hospital for treatment.

SPO1 Leonardo Pasco of the Quezon City Police District Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit said the incident occurred around 7 p.m. while the two were walking near their home accompanied by Randy Pascual, a friend of Sacapano, and two other children.

Pasco said the unidentified gunman, armed with a 38 caliber revolver, attacked the group at the corner of Sto. Niño Street and Don Alejandro Avenue. The suspect shot Sacapano in the back. As the victim

fell, his attacker shot him three more times in the head. One of the bullets ricocheted and hit the girl in the hand.

The killer then fled from the scene, with the victim's companions unable to do anything.

Pasco said the suspect could have been hired to kill the victim over an old grudge or a land dispute.

But the QCPD-CIDU investigator did not discuss a possible motive behind the killing because follow up operations were underway.



Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Region IX, Zamboanga Peninsula
DIVISION OF ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE
Dipolog City
Tel. nos. 212-2604 & 212-2605
Fax Nos. 212-2604 & 212-2607
E-mail Address: nelfa_acopiado@yahoo.com

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Education, Division of Zamboanga del Norte, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project.

Name of Project	Location	Tablets and Chairs	Teacher's Table	Armchairs	Approved Budget for the Contract
SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF SCHOOL FURNITURE CY 2007	Various Schools in Zamboanga del Norte Division				
Package A (1st District)		350 sets	22 sets	400 units	P 1,106,000.00
Package B (2nd District)		675 sets	44 sets	850 units	2,199,000.00
Package C (3rd District)		875 sets	57 sets	1,100 units	2,865,000.00
TOTAL		1,900 sets	123 sets	2,350 units	P 6,170,000.00

ABC & Funding Source : GOP through the GAA FY 2007
Contract Duration : One hundred seventy calendar days
Delivery Period : 1st delivery (50%) April 28, 2008
2nd delivery (50%) June 27, 2008

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9164 known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interests or outstanding capital stocks belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II, Instruction to Bidders of the Bidding Documents.

For Bidders outside this province are required to submit Mayor's Permit from any municipality of Zamboanga del Norte.

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

Activity	Date	Venue
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	Dec. 26, 2007 to Jan. 17, 2008	ASDS Office
2. Pre-bid Conference	Jan. 15, 2008	ASDS Office
3. Deadline of Submission of Bids	Jan. 29, 2008 1:00 PM	ASDS Office
4. Opening of Bids	Jan. 29, 2008 - 2:00 PM	ASDS Office

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of FIVE THOUSAND PESOS only (P5,000.00) to the 2N Division Cashier.

The Department of Education, Zamboanga del Norte Division BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) Nelfa A. ACOPIADO, Ed. D.
BAC Chairman

(PDI - December 28, 2007)

METROBRIEFS

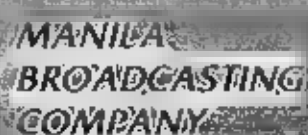


Car theft charges filed vs 9 Manila cops

NINE Manila policemen were indicted for car theft in the Manila Regional Trial Court yesterday after they allegedly took a man's jeepney in 2003. Assistant City Prosecutor Anna Geraldine Agar ordered the filing of violation of RA 6539 (Anti-Camapping Law) charges against the policemen when they failed to appear in the preliminary investigation of the cases filed by Bernard Carpio. The complainant claimed that SPO1 Romeo Noriega, SPO1 Reynaldo Casem Jr., PO3 Armando Casem, PO3 Gerónimo Opeiac, PO2 Corderon Cruz, PO2 Ranie Dionisio, PO1 Marcel Suriga, PO1 Arthur Cordero and SPO3 Enrico Paomara III blocked his way around 6 p.m. of June 23 while he was driving his jeepney with his son. Carpio alleged that he was arrested by the nine policemen, former members of the Manila Police District drug enforcement group, and was brought to Paco Park, where he was told to sign transfer of ownership papers in exchange for his freedom. Refusing to do so, Carpio said he was taken to the MPD headquarters on United Nations Avenue where Paomara reportedly took out a sachet of shabu from his drawer and said it would be used against him. Carpio also filed complaints of physical injuries, illegal arrest, robbery, extortion and planting of evidence against the policemen, but these were dismissed by the assistant city prosecutor. The complainant, noted Agar in her resolution, was caught in a "buy-bust operation" and did not support his complaint with a medical certificate. She said the policemen were also unable to acquire ownership of the jeepney. Neither did they have any motive that would make them resort to planting evidence, she added.

Alison W. Lopez


Chiro youth group marks 50th year

THE CHIRO Youth Movement in Pasig City is celebrating its 50th golden Anniversary on Dec. 29-30 at the Pasig Catholic College grounds. Past and present members are invited to participate in the anniversary rites. Chiro Pasig, a youth based group, was established by Fr. Danny Van der Portella, CICM at the Immaculate Conception Parish in 1957. The church organization has scheduled a series of activities including a Holy Mass and program, on Saturday at 6:30 p.m. and a motorcade at 8 a.m. on Sunday. For more inquiries, please contact Tita Raymundo (09186707407) and Romy Saguisag (09202142485).

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GRAND DRAW WITH BAND CONCERT



Per DTI-NCR Permit # 0000 - Series of 2007

Japan to amend textbook entries on Okinawa's WWII mass suicides

TOKYO—JAPAN'S EDUCATION Ministry announced Wednesday that it would partly reinstate references in textbooks to the military's role in forcing civilians to commit mass suicide during the Battle of Okinawa in the final months of World War II.

Faced with protests from Okinawa, the ministry said that high school textbooks to be used in the next academic year would acknowledge the military's "involvement" in the mass suicides. But the ministry stopped short of putting back original references to the military's "coercing" or "forcing" Okinawans into com-

mitting mass suicides, saying that no supporting documents had been found.

In April, under the administration of Shinzo Abe, the nationalist former prime minister, education officials said textbooks would be cleansed of longtime references to the military. The decision caused an uproar among Okinawans who, during World War II, were brainwashed by Japanese soldiers into believing that they would be slaughtered by invading Americans and that mass suicides were preferable. Thousands are believed to have com-

mitted suicide in villages occupied by Japanese soldiers; mass suicides did not take place where there were no soldiers.

In October, after a huge protest was held in Okinawa and Abe was succeeded by a centrist, Yasuo Fukuda, education officials said they would reconsider further changes to the references—contradicting their longstanding assertion that the country's history textbooks are not influenced by politics.

The contents of Japan's history textbooks have long been a source of tension with China and South Korea, which have

accused Tokyo of trying to whitewash its militarist past. But the ministry's plan to revise explanations about the Battle of Okinawa signaled for the first time that the issue of textbooks had become a political problem domestically.

Last month, textbook publishers submitted passages reinstating references to the military's "coercing" or "forcing" Okinawans into mass suicide. But the ministry rejected this clear description of the military's role, effectively opting for the softer reference to the military's "involvement." **NYT**

Turkish planes strike rebels in northern Iraq

ANKARA/SULAIMANIYA—TURKISH warplanes bombed Kurdish guerrilla targets in northern Iraq on Wednesday, Turkey's general staff said, in the fourth such cross-border raid in five days.

Nato member Turkey says it has the right under international law to hit rebels of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) who take shelter in northern Iraq and have mounted attacks inside Turkey that have killed dozens of troops in recent months.

The Turkish military said its offensive against the outlawed PKK inside Turkey and across the border in northern Iraq would continue. Tensions over northern Iraq helped send oil up to \$96 a barrel, a one-month high.

The Iraqi government and US forces say they support Turkey's right to strike at the PKK, who yearn for a separate Kurdish homeland, but want any action to be coordinated with them and small in scale to avoid destabilizing northern Iraq.

In a separate incident, six PKK members were killed in clashes with troops in the Turkish border province of Sirnak on Wednesday, the military said in a statement.

Turkish aircraft also struck targets across northern Iraq on Saturday, Sunday and Tuesday. The campaign began with a larger bombing raid on Dec. 16 that killed more than 150 PKK guerrillas, according to the military.

The United States, which must tread carefully to balance its regional interests, has begun providing Turkey with intelligence on the PKK in northern Iraq after coming under pressure from Ankara for failing to crack down on the rebels.

Ankara blames the PKK—considered a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United States and the European Union—for the deaths of nearly 40,000 people since it began an armed struggle for a separate Kurdish homeland in 1984. **Reuters**



TATIANA, a Siberian tiger that killed one person and injured two others, is seen in an undated photo. It was later shot dead.

San Fo cops look for clues on how zoo tiger escaped

SAN FRANCISCO—NOW CONSIDERED a crime scene, the San Francisco Zoo was closed to visitors on Wednesday as police investigators swept the grounds searching for evidence to explain how a Siberian tiger escaped its open-air grotto on Tuesday, killing one young man and seriously injuring two others.

Investigators intend to interview the survivors, two brothers ages 19 and 23, who were in shock but in stable condition after surgery to clean wounds from "deep claw and tooth attacks," said a doctor during a news conference in San Francisco General Hospital. The identity of the brothers has not been revealed.

The tiger, a 300-pound female Siberian named Tatiana who attacked her trainer last December, was shot to death by the police after the zoo's 5 p.m. closing on Tuesday, when the cat somehow jumped barriers around the

Lion House habitat, and killed Carlos Sousa Jr., 17, of San Jose.

The police said they were trying to determine whether the tiger escaped because of negligence or equipment failure or if it was somehow provoked to jump the 18-foot wall around the grotto.

The director of the zoo, Manuel Mollinedo, along with a city official who was monitoring the matter, strongly suggested on Wednesday that the tiger must have been lured or provoked and somehow assisted, perhaps inadvertently, to scale a barrier that had never before been breached.

"Something happened to get that cat agitated, to do what it d.d," Mollinedo said. "She was a very mellow cat. I never saw her down in that moat, although she has access to it. Something triggered her to jump out of there or she grabbed onto something and pulled herself over." **NYT**

Indonesia landslide victims pulled from mud after rains

TAWANGMANGU, INDONESIA—Indonesian rescuers pulled corpses from mud on Thursday as they hunted for victims of landslides and floods on Java island that have left more than 130 people feared dead, officials said.

Landslides hit two districts in Central Java in the early hours of Wednesday morning, engulfing entire homes and blocking key access roads, while floods swelling in East Java swept away a bridge, leaving an estimated 50 missing.

"This is still an estimate—there were many people passing the bridge at the time according to witnesses," a policeman at Madiun district police station, Ilham, told AFP Thursday.

"The search is limited to along

the river's banks. But no victims have been found so far," he said, adding that strong currents were hindering the search.

The Kompas newspaper reported that the 50-meter long bridge was built in the Dutch colonial period.

In Central Java, hundreds of troops, police, local officials and residents used their hands, hoes and shovels to search for bodies, officials said.

In worst hit Karanganyar district, the head of the local disaster management center Heru Aji Pratomo said two more bodies were pulled from the muddy wreckage of one landslide, bringing the number of bodies recovered to 36. **AFP**

Vietnam boy dies of bird flu

HANOI—BIRD FLU killed a 4-year-old boy from an ethnic minority group in northern Vietnam, the country's first human case in nearly five months, a health official said on Thursday.

Separately, the government said the virus had returned to the Mekong Delta in the south this month, killing hundreds of ducks and chickens.

The boy from the Thai ethnic minority group fell sick and was taken to a Hanoi hospital on Dec. 14 with high fever and serious pneumonia, the official at the Preventive Medicine Center in the mountainous province of Son La said.

The child died on Dec. 16 and tests performed in a Vietnamese laboratory have found the H5N1 virus. **Reuters**

Prominent deaths of 2007

Politics

- Bo Yibo, veteran of China's communist revolution, at 98 in Beijing (Jan. 15)
- Hrant Dink, Turkish journalist of Armenian origin, murdered aged 53 in Istanbul (Jan. 19)
- Maurice Papon, former top French civil servant who collaborated with the Nazis in World War II, aged 96 (Feb. 17)
- Boris Yeltsin, Russia's first post-Soviet president, aged 76 from a heart attack in a Moscow hospital (April 23)
- Mahietoa II, monarch of the Pacific island state of Samoa and the world's oldest ruling head of state, aged 94 in the capital Apia (May 11)
- Jerry Falwell, the US evangelical firebrand, aged 73 in hospital of heart problems (May 15)
- Kurt Waldheim, former UN secretary general and Austrian president who hid his Nazi past, aged 88 (June 14)
- Afghanistan's last king, Mohammed Zahir Shah, aged 92 (July 23)
- Former Angolan independence leader Holden Roberto, aged 84 in Luanda (Aug. 2)
- Iraqi Sunni Muslim leader Abdul Sattar Abu Roesha, killed in an al-Qaida attack in Anbar province, days after he shook the hand of US President George W. Bush. Age unknown (Sept. 11)
- Khun Sa, former Burmese drugs lord who was once on the US "most wanted" list, at around 74 in Rangoon (Oct. 28)
- Paul Warfield Tibbets Jr., the US pilot who dropped the first atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima in 1945. At age 92 in Columbus, Ohio (Nov. 1)
- S. R. Thamilselvan, the political head of Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels, killed in an air strike aged 40 (Nov. 2)
- Ian Smith, the rebel white minority leader of Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. At age 88 in Cape Town, South Africa (Nov. 20)

- fiction writer, aged 84 in New York (April 11)
- Jack Valenti, former Hollywood lobbyist and US presidential aide, aged 85 in Washington (April 26)
- Mstislav Rostropovich, Russian cellist and conductor, aged 80 in Moscow (April 27)
- Ingmar Bergman, Swedish film director, at his home on the island of Fårö at 89 (July 30)
- Max Roach, US jazz drummer and composer, at age 83 in New York (Aug. 16)
- Italian opera singer Luciano Pavarotti, aged 71 in his native town of Modena (Sept. 6)
- Jane Wyman, US actress and first wife of US president Ronald Reagan, aged 93 (Sept. 10)
- Marcel Marceau, French mime artist, aged 84 (Sept. 22)
- Deborah Kerr, aged 86, Scottish actress who starred in "From Here to Eternity" (Oct. 16)
- South African reggae star Lucky Dube, one of Africa's biggest-selling artists, shot dead in Johannesburg aged 43 (Oct. 19)
- US novelist Norman Mailer, aged 84 in New York (Nov. 10)
- Maurice Bejart, French choreographer, aged 80 in Lausanne (Nov. 22)
- US motorcycle stunt artist Evel Knievel, aged 69 in Florida (Nov. 30)
- Karlheinz Stockhausen, the German composer, aged 79 in Kuersten in western Germany (Dec. 7)
- Oscar Peterson, the legendary jazz pianist and composer, of kidney failure aged 82 near Toronto (Dec. 23)
- Bollywood veteran film producer G.R. Sippy, in Mumbai aged of 93 of age-related ailments (Dec. 25)



PAVAROTTI

Business

- Momofuku Ando, the Japanese inventor of instant noodles, aged 96 in Tokyo (Jan. 5)
- Anita Roddick, founder of the Body Shop cosmetics chain, aged 64 in Chichester, England of a brain hemorrhage (Sept. 10)
- Tony Ryan, Irish co-founder of low-cost airline Ryanair, aged 71 at home in Ireland following a long illness (Oct. 3)
- Toca Miah, the Bangladeshi "snake king," who started the country's first commercial snake farm, of snake bite aged 38 (Nov. 4)
- Former General Motors chief executive Roger Smith, who notably featured in Michael Moore's film "Roger and Me," aged 82 (Nov. 30)

AFP

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Afghanistan expels EU, UN officials

KABUL—A SENIOR UNITED NATIONS OFFICIAL and another from the European Union left Afghanistan on Thursday after the government ordered their expulsion, accusing both of holding talks with the Taliban and for paying cash to the group.

The expulsions have caused a diplomatic row between the government and key aid agencies who fear the loss of two such experienced Afghan hands could hinder reconstruction and development efforts.

Aleem Siddique said the UN staffer had left on Thursday morning on a regular chartered flight to neighboring Pakistan. Diplomats in Kabul confirmed the EU official, the mission's acting head, had been on the same flight.

While neither organization has formally named the pair, it is common knowledge in the capital that they are Michael Semple and Mervin Patterson, who have lived and worked in Afghanistan for more than a decade—even during the rule of the Taliban that was toppled by the US-led invasion in 2001.

Semple is British and Patterson Irish.

The Afghan government declared the pair *personas non grata* after accusing them of

meeting Taliban officials last week in troubled southern Helmand province, a bastion for the insurgency and the main drug-producing region of Afghanistan.

EU and UN officials insist the pair were meeting only local elders and the whole affair was a "misunderstanding."

"As part of our efforts in Helmand province we need to be speaking to people on the ground," Siddique said.

"We are dealing with a very

complex situation here in Afghanistan. Tribal communities and tribal relationships are a very complex web."

Afghan officials stood by the expulsions on Thursday.

"We are acting on the basis of our national interest. The two sides (EU and the UN) have agreed that they should go," one official told Reuters.

Aid organizations and analysts say the biggest threat to humanitarian work in the country has been the growing Tal-

iban insurgency, fueled by the region's vast drug trade, and that the only way to stop it is with the cooperation of tribal elders and leaders.

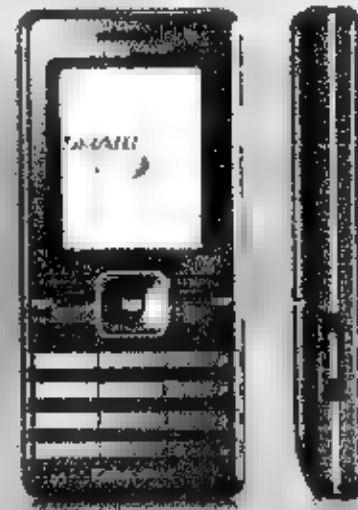
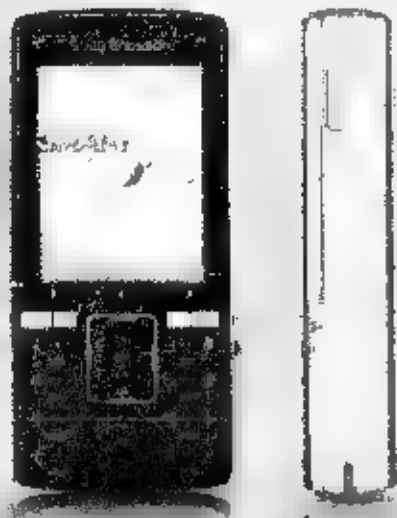
Frequently this involves offering lucrative supply and development opportunities to local leaders in exchange for cooperation on projects. Often the lines are blurred between who is a Taliban member, Taliban sympathizer or those merely hostile to the central government and foreigners. Reuters

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Hapee cagers a win from joyous sweep

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE PHENOMENAL RUN ALMOST CAME TO AN END.

Harbour Centre lost its poise in the clutch yesterday, allowing Hapee Toothpaste to escape with a 72-69 triumph and move within the cusp of a perfect season and a PBL championship.

Harbour Fil-Am Solomon Mercado bungled two crucial free throws with 2.3 seconds left and the Complete Protectors held on to a precarious 70-69 advantage.

Reed Juntilla capped a game-high 21 points for the Complete Protectors by converting two free throws off a duty foul to set the final tally.

"Harbour played heads-up basketball," said Hapee coach Jun Noel after his charges stretched their winning streak to 12 in Game 1 of the V-Go Extreme Energy Drink Cup best-of-three Finals series at the Rizal Coliseum.

Batang Pier poised to snap the Complete Protectors' unbeaten run when Mercado, playing sensational ball throughout the conference, drew a foul from Larry Rodriguez.

But the pressure proved

GAME TOMORROW
(Rizal Coliseum)
3 p.m.—Harbour
Centre vs Hapee
(Game 2-Finals)

too much for the rookie guard. His misses derailed a Batang Pier rally highlighted by a Benedict Fernandez triple that trimmed the margin to a point, 70-69, with 17 seconds remaining.

"Our players' desire to win was there," said Noel. "Whether Mercado shoots the free throws or not, we thought that we could still run a fastbreak. We could still have a play in the last two seconds."

Mark Borboran chipped in 12 points, while Fil-Am Norwood proved to be the better Fil-Am performer with 11 points, 12 boards, seven assists and two blocks.

Dino Daa also shone in the second half as the Complete Protectors rose from a nine-point deficit, 28-37, at the break.

Earlier, Toyota Balintawak hacked out an 88-77 triumph over San Mig Coffee to secure third place.

Erwin Sta. Maria paced the Road Kings' fourth-quarter surge to finish with 17 points, while Cholo Villanueva added 14.

The Complete Protectors finally grabbed the lead when Daa converted

two free throws off a flagrant foul by Edwin Asoro.

Then Borboran and Norwood got into the scoring mix to lift Hapee ahead, 54-51, by the end of the quarter.

Juntilla then towed the Complete Protectors to a 69-62 advantage heading in to the final two minutes, before a TY Tang jumper sparked the Batang Pier's late run.

With Hapee still up at 70-66, Fernandez nailed a clutch triple in the dwindling seconds to threaten at 70-69 following Tang and Asoro's missed attempts from beyond the arc.

Batang Pier opened a 37-28 spread at the half as the Complete Protectors shot only six points in the second period.

The scores:

First Game

TOYOTA BALINTAWAK 86—Sta. Maria 17, Villanueva 14, Aldave 12, Rodriguez 12, Sena 8, Casio 5, Faundo 4, Hayes 4, Cole 2, Balgos 2, Alcaraz 2, Dedicatoda 2, Jaime 2, Guerrero 2.

SAN MIG COFFEE 77—Dela Peña 19, Rarbeses 14, Custodio 12, Escobar 6, Bolocan 6, Ekve 4, Saldua 4, Luerzon 3, Del Rosario 3, Pascual 2, Arao 2, Sorongon 2, Sison 0, Angeles 0.

Quarters: 27-20, 44-41, 65-60, 88-77

Second Game

HAPEE 72—Juntilla 21, Borboran 12, Norwood 11, Mercado 10, Daa 9, Seguindef 3, Quinday 2, Hugnalan 2, Rodriguez 2, Hermida 0, Espiritu 0, Grilado 0, Vlay 0.

HARBOR CENTRE 69—Tang 14, Asoro 13, Mercado 10, Ababou 9, Taylor 4, Malerhofer 4, Vergara 4, Gonzales 4, Fernandez 3, Malabanar 2, Carizanos 0. Quarters: 22-16, 28-37, 54-51, 72-69

Strong RP team to Asian chessfest

GRANDMASTER Wesley So, at 14 the world's youngest grandmaster today, will most likely play board one for the national squad vying in the Asian Chess Team Championship starting Jan. 2 in the southern Indian city of Visakhapatnam.

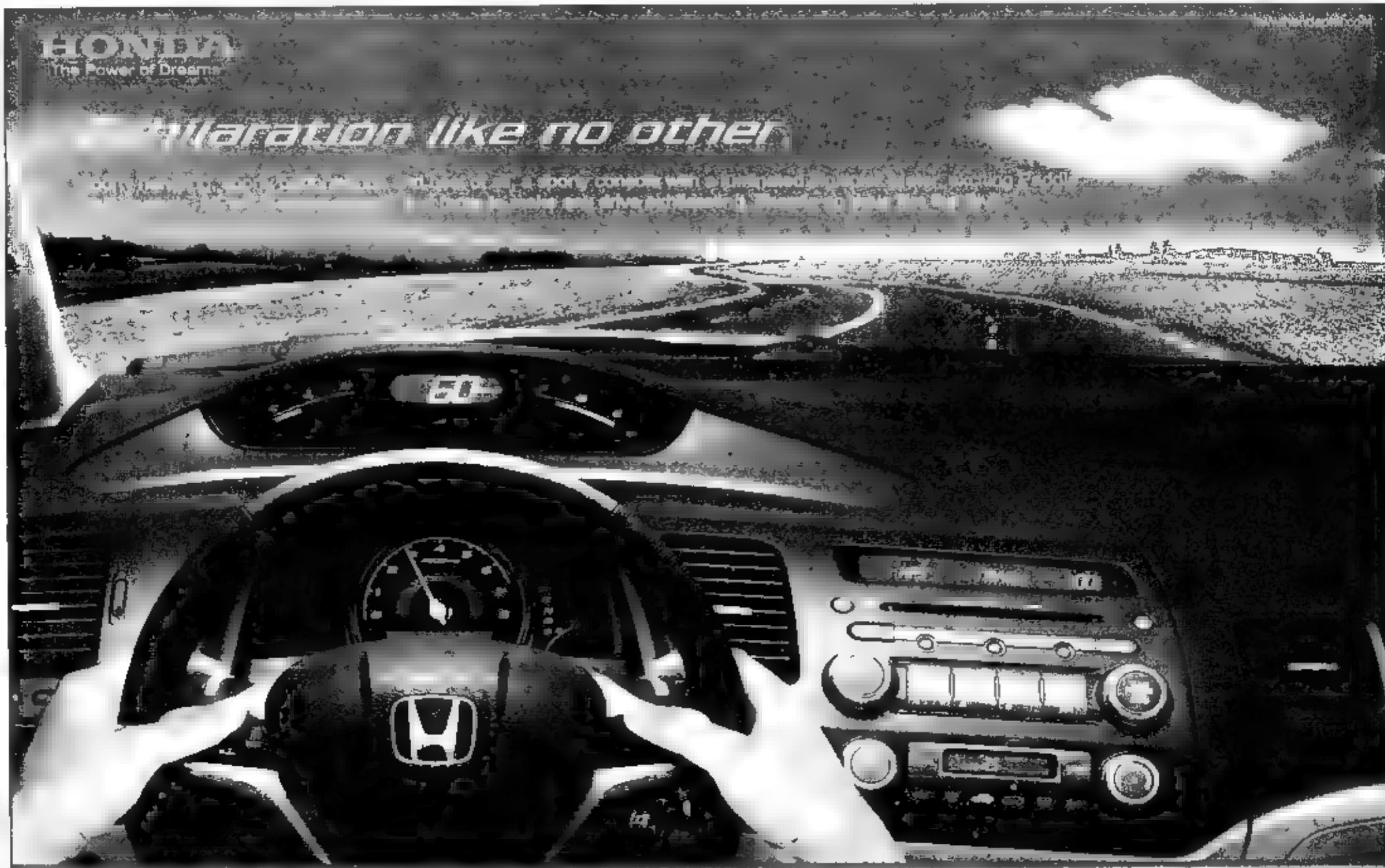
"I hope to do well in this event," said So, currently No. 3 in the RP-Fide rating list with an Elo of 2531.

So is going to India with three other GMs—Mark Paragua, Eugene Torre and Rogelio Antonio Jr.—and Singapore-based International Master Julio Catalino Sadorra, who already has one GM norm.

National Chess Federation president Prospero "Butch" Pichay said the five-man team is the strongest possible squad that the country can field at this time.

So completed his GM norm at the recent 2nd Prospero Pichay Jr Cup International Open.

Sheerie Joy Lomibao, Beverly Mendoza, Sherily Cua and Catherine Pereña make up the RP women's team. Marlon Bernardino, Contributor



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NOKIA



Globe

Pumaren, Lim keen on UAAP-NCAA caging merger

By June Navarro

SAN BEDA'S SAM EKWE HAS BEEN lording it over at the paint without respect for the other team. And nobody could break the rhythm of La Salle's JV Casio when his three-pointers find their target.

La Salle coach Franz Pumaren and San Beda mentor Frankie Lim both think a game featuring Casio's shooting and the dominating inside presence of Ekwe could be a dream encounter in the 2008 UAAP-NCAA Centennial Cup.

Both champion coaches yesterday gave their nod to an ambitious plan that could unite all the schools from the UAAP and the NCAA under one mammoth collegiate league starting next year.

"It's a welcome development for collegiate basketball," said Pumaren, whose Green Archers captured this year's UAAP men's basketball varsity crown. "I think it will benefit both the UAAP and the NCAA."

Lim, who has steered the Red Lions to a second straight NCAA seniors basketball title, shared the optimism and enthusiasm of Pumaren.

That will be huge," said Lim. "But if you ask me, it would be best if they put up one collegiate league and make it a yearly endeavor."

Envisioned by BAP-Samahang Basketball Pilipinas executive director Patrick Gregorio, the Centennial Cup is being planned to coincide with next year's UAAP hosting by the University of the Philippines on the school's 100th anniversary.

There's one concern, though, that Pumaren and Lim want addressed. Both

believe the format should benefit all the member schools.

Lim said the Centennial Cup organizers should rate the teams and put them in a division or bracket where they could flourish. Pumaren is bating for a format that would suit the calendar of both leagues.

"There are a lot of ways to skin the cat," said Lim. "They could put up a bracket for strong teams or a Division II for weaker teams."

Pumaren said: "They should sit down and create a format that would appeal to

both institutions. But generally, it (the merger) is a very good idea."

Gregorio will present a concept paper on the proposed UAAP-NCAA merger early next month to UAAP president Emerlinda Roman, UP chancellor Sergio Cao and NCAA boss Mapua, through its president Rey Vea.

After getting the nod of the UAAP board and NCAA management committee, Gregorio said an ad hoc committee, whose chief task is to oversee the affairs and interests of the UAAP-NCAA merger, will be formed.

P1.8-M Clark Int'l Marathon unfurls Jan. 13

A TOP PRIZE OF \$7,000 (ABOUT P288,000) will be at stake for the grand winners of the 2008 Clark International Marathon set Jan. 13 at the Clark Freeport in Pampanga.

The male and female runner-up will get P150,000 each and the third placers will pocket P75,000 in the 42-kilometer event organized by the Clark Development Corp. in partnership with ActivAsia Inc. and ABS-CBN.

Deadline for registration is Jan. 5.

The total cash prize at stake actually reaches P1.8 million with the winners of the 10K and 5K runs getting P15,000 each and the age group first placers receiving P7,000 each.

In addition, cash prizes will be awarded down to the 10th place of the main races.

Billed as the "Race to the Future," the marathon will be the first to use a special computer chip that can monitor the progress of the runners with GPS technology.

Under the AMB ChipX Timing system, each athlete is fitted with a transponder, which emits a signal. As the athlete crosses the start-finish line, the signal is detected and the exact time calculated.

The system guarantees 100-percent accuracy regardless of the density of participants arriving at the finish line, assuring the runners of a fair and exact result.

The Clark Freeport is an ideal marathon site. With an international airport and several world-class hotels, Clark is not only accessible but also very traveler-friendly, offering a variety of activities before and after the marathon.

The marathon is sanctioned by the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association and endorsed by the Philippine Sports Commission.

The race will be televised by the ABS-CBN network in the country and The Filipino Channel worldwide.



STA. LUCIA big man Marlou Aquino tries to put up a shot off Talk 'N Text's Khalani Ferreria and Jay Washington in a recent game. **RONALD**

Realtors out to keep No. 2 vs Dragons

THE ORIGINAL PLAN WAS JUST TO MAKE the top five. But with everything finally falling into place, the Sta. Lucia Realtors are suddenly looking at achieving even bigger things.

"Right now, I think top two is doable," coach Boyet Fernandez said last week after the Realtors won their fifth straight game and tied for second place in the Smart PBA Philippine Cup eliminations.

Sta. Lucia, the underachieving team of the last five years, seeks to extend that streak and claim solo second place today when the red-hot Realtors battle the slumping and undermanned Welcoat Dragons at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao.

Game time is 4:35 p.m.

"Before the season, our goal was to make the top five (and be in the playoffs outright)," Fernandez said after a 92-91 win over Talk 'N Text last Dec. 23. "But now that we are in this position, we will definitely try to go (for a) top two (slot)."

Welcoat could be easy picking for the Realtors, as the Dragons have lost their last eight games—the tournament's longest losing spell.

They are in danger of getting eliminated for the third straight time in the league unless something drastic happens—like winning their last three games and Coca-Cola and

STANDINGS	W	L
Purefoods	11	4
Sta. Lucia	9	6
Red Bull	9	6
Alaska	8	7
Talk 'N Text	8	7
Magnolia	8	7
Ginebra	7	9
Coca-Cola	6	9
Air21	6	9
Welcoat	3	12

GAMES TODAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:35 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs Welcoat
7:20 p.m.—Magnolia vs Air21

Air21 failing to win any of their last three.

But in fairness to Welcoat, this team has been walking wounded for almost two months now, with cornerstone Jay-R Reyes out because of a bruised knee and chief backup, point guard Froilan Baguion, also unable to play because of an eye injury.

There were unfounded reports that Reyes, who finished second to Sta. Lucia's Kelly Williams in the top rookie race last year, would be reactivated for this game.

The Express, meanwhile, try to make the wild-card phase, at least, when they tangle with Magnolia in the 7-20 p.m. contest.

Gary David, who led the Express in scoring last year before an ACL tear put him out of commission, could make his much-awaited return tonight.

A win by the Express would give them a 7-9 card and out of reach of the Dragons.

Musong R. Castillo

Juvic slowly steps out of Frankie's shadow

By Cedell Tupas, Inquirer Visayas

BAOLOCOD CITY—JUVIC PAGUNSAN IS OPTIMISTIC he will be able to surpass the form that saw him leap out of nowhere to place 17th in the Order of Merit at the end of the Asian Tour season this month.

After coming through with big finishes in two of the last five tournaments of the year, the 29-year-old said he plans to work on his physical conditioning early in January, before the season opener, the Asian Tour Invitational, from Jan. 24-27.

"I played 12 straight tournaments on the tour and I need to rest," said Pagunsan, who is in Bacolod for a short vacation. "But I'll train early for next season."

Pagunsan enjoyed an spectacular first season that netted him the Rookie of the Year honors and was looking forward to another big season at the start of 2007.

But a collarbone injury hampered his progress,

forcing him out of action for almost three months.

The former caddy at the Bacolod Golf and Country Club in Binsan, Murcia, though, turned adversity into an opportunity to sharpen his game.

Pagunsan said he spent long hours lifting weights and did road runs.

It didn't take long for the two-time Southeast Asian Games individual gold medalist's efforts to be rewarded as he produced a breakthrough win in the Pertamina Indonesia President Invitational. The victory was worth \$55,475.

Pagunsan led by four strokes heading into the final round of the season-ending Volvo Masters in Thailand only to flounder on the last hole, yielding the title to Thai hero Prayad Marksaeng by a shot.

But the \$69,000 runner-up purse raised Pagunsan's earnings to \$187,452, the best among Filipinos on the tour.

His strong Asian Tour finish boosted him past Pil-

JUVIC Pagunsan lets out a yell as he sinks the winning putt in the Indonesia tournament.



ipino No. 1 Frankie Minoza, who ended up 19th with \$183,405.

But he still remains several notches off the stature of Minoza, this year's Philippine Open champion who also owns a victory in the much tougher and richer Japanese circuit this season.

Pagunsan said he hopes his recurring shoulder injury will heal completely so he can focus on his game in time for the beginning of the season.

GREEN OVER BLUE

THREE IN A ROW Members of the victorious La Salle team, led by team captain Freddie Mendoza (standing, second from right) and top scorer Miko Alejandro (standing, third from left), pose behind their trophy after beating their Ateneo counterparts for the third straight year in the recent La Salle-Litton National Cup (LNC) at Tagaytay's perfect five holes. Led by Alejandro's perfect five points from five match wins, the Green Archers dominated the three-day, Ryder Cup-style dual meet, 24-18.



John Hay Chairman's Cup golf gets going today

BAGUIO CITY—WITH NEWLY RENOVATED GREENS and new tee boxes, Camp John Hay Golf Club is all set to formally treat its members with the Chairman's Cup tees off today.

More than 230 members, including chair Robert Sobrepeña and guests, are vying in the two-day tourney. Aside from the usual trophies and raffle prizes, a Mazda 3 sedan will be given away as part of the club's

quarterly car raffle bonanza.

A Subair System, a device which literally drains a drenched green in 30 seconds, has been installed at Camp John Hay's 100-yard, par-three sixth hole, which is usually flooded during the rainy season.

In addition, tee mounds were upgraded to suit international standards.

"Our members can now truly enjoy No. 6 of the

beautiful par-69 layout redesigned by Jack Nicklaus," said Sobrepeña. "The course itself is slowly getting back in superb shape with faster and firmer greens."

Sobrepeña said the club made the innovations in preparation for a busy 2008 season, including the annual Pil-Am and Corporate Cup.

The Asian Ladies Invitational will make a comeback in May.

SPORTSWATCH

San Mig Coffee senior golf final leg today at Villamor

THE SIXTH AND FINAL LEG OF THE 2007 San Mig Coffee Sugar Free Senior Golf Series tees off today at the newly refurbished Villamor Golf Club in Pasay City. Tee-off time is from 6 a.m. to 10

The Villamor Senior Golfers Association, headed by Gen Telesforo J. Tayko (ret.), is hosting the 18-hole tournament for about 150 players.

"I would like to welcome all my fellow golfing elders for the windup of our series," said Ducky Paredes, president of the Federation of Philippine Amateur Senior Golfers Inc.

'Bagong Taon' derby today

MORE THAN 70 ONE-ON-ONE SHOWDOWNS featuring some of the country's top cockers are in store in today's "Bagong Taon" 4-cock derby at Pasay City Cockpit.

A cash prize of P250,000 is up for grabs in the derby, said pit managers Eric dela Rosa and Butch Ojeda, who are hosting the event with the support of the Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association (PCCA).

Next up at the venue is the Smalltime 2-Cock Derby—attended after last month's successful Mashalo 2-Cock Derby—on Jan. 4 with P300,000 at stake. Entry fee is P3,300.

Race 1—(Tri)—

gat (3), Sweet Karah (1)

Race 2—(Tri/Tri)

Yes Sir (1), M's Yous (2), Madam Composition (7), Cool N' Sazzy (8), Memory of Fire (3)

Race 3—(Tri/Tri)—Pernickio (3), On The Fairway/Tata Ra (2), Elegancia (7), Unfolding (1)

Race 4—(Tri/Tri)—Lord Brian (1), Triple Threat (5), Erica's Talent (6), Speed Admiral (7)

Race 5—(Tri/Tri)—El Terrible (8), Ger Francis (1), Hak Kee Hok (4), Manila Magic (7)

Race 6—Fabiola (5), Sir Guppy (8), Speed Bullet (8), Interceptor (2), Goldsphere (3)

Race 7—(Tri/Tri)—Venus D'Goddess (7), Good Humour/Field Star (1), Tower of Strength (7), Ocean Cookie (3)

Race 8—(Tri/Tri)—Dondon's Entry (3), Rebound (4), Terry Toon (6), Best In Field (7)

Race 9—(Super 6/Tri/Tri)—Landed Visa (8), From This Moment (7), Stallone/Burst of Speed (1), Devil Rising (10), Tiger Ratty (1), Freedom Charger (3)



BY TOP CHOICE



FILIPINO ace Stefano Marcelo shows his trophy as overall winner of the 2007 Asian karting series in Macau. He is flanked by runner-up Guykoh Boonhan (left) of Thailand and third placer Luca Ferrigutti of Hong Kong.

Marcelo tops Asian kart series

MACAU—STEFANO MARCELO CLINCHED THE ASIAN KARTING overall crown with an impressive podium finish in the recent Macau Kart Prix at the Kartodromo de Coloane.

The 14-year-old lead driver of San Miguel Corp. Marcelo Racing finished second to Japan's Naotaka Hori in the pre-final race of the 2007 Asian Karting Open Championship to sew up the title.

Marcelo topped the series with 110 points, beating Guykoh Boonhan of Thailand and third placer Luca Ferrigutti of Hong Kong.

Apart from winning the Shell Helix Kartier of the Year plum and the Cebu ROK Series title, Marcelo finished in the top 10 of the 2007 ROK World Cup in Italy recently.

As Asian champion, Marcelo merited an invitation to race his red Maranello kart in the featured KF1 category of the prix, where he competed against the world's finest factory drivers, including world champions Marco Ardigo, Gary Catt and Wil Stevens.

Marcelo qualified to the KF1 pre-final race ahead of Stevens

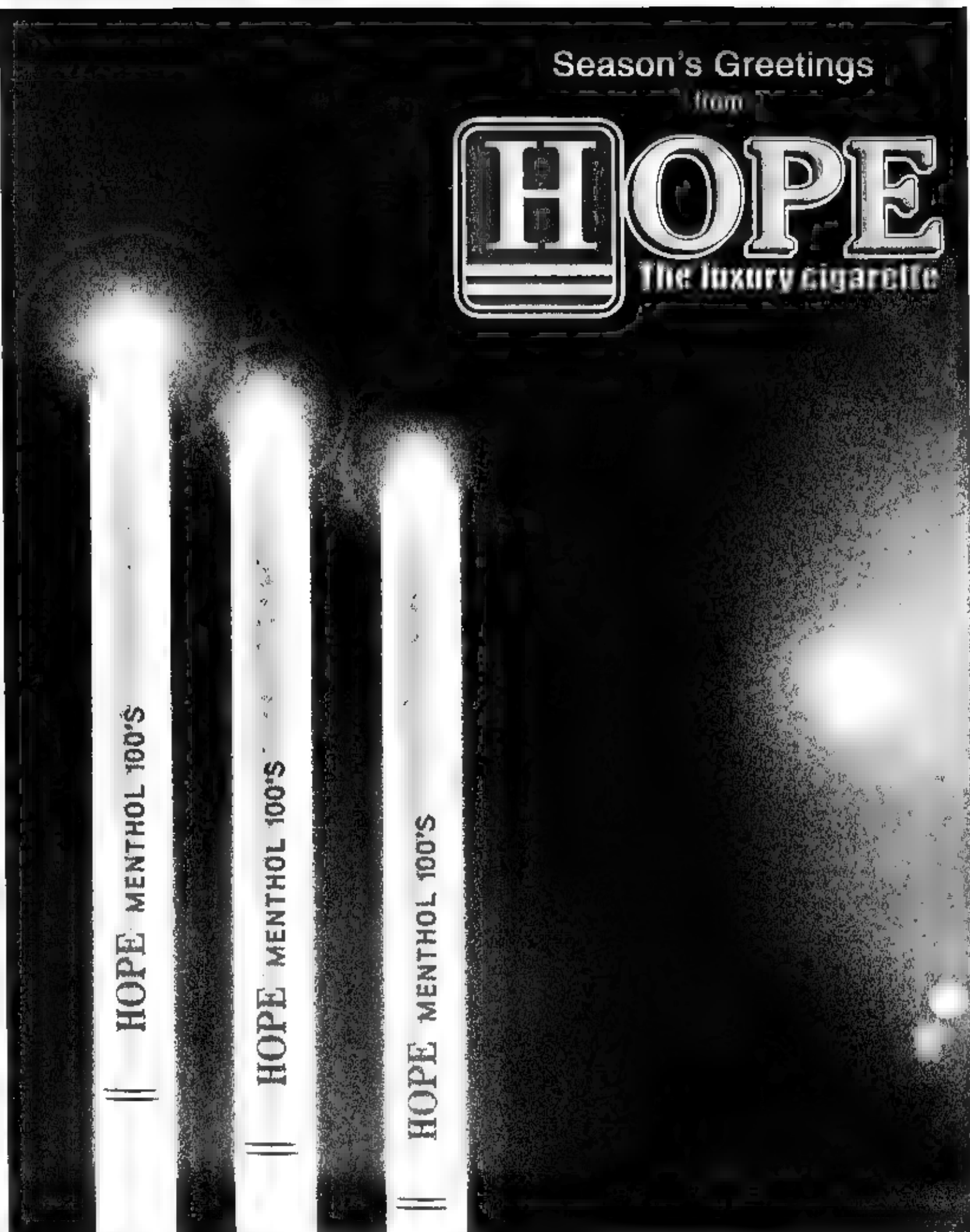
and just a whisker behind Ardigo despite using an old engine.

Holding his own against Tony Kart-equipped European drivers, Marcelo overtook Ardigo, Catt and Stevens halfway through the pre-finals and eventually wound up fifth in the 28-man KF1 grid.

In the gruelling 25-lap final race, Marcelo held fourth spot behind the Tony Kart karters until exhaustion took its toll. He settled for 10th place, matching his result in the World Cup.

"It's quite an experience racing with the world champions," he said. "It was a fruitful stint considering we got the Asian title."

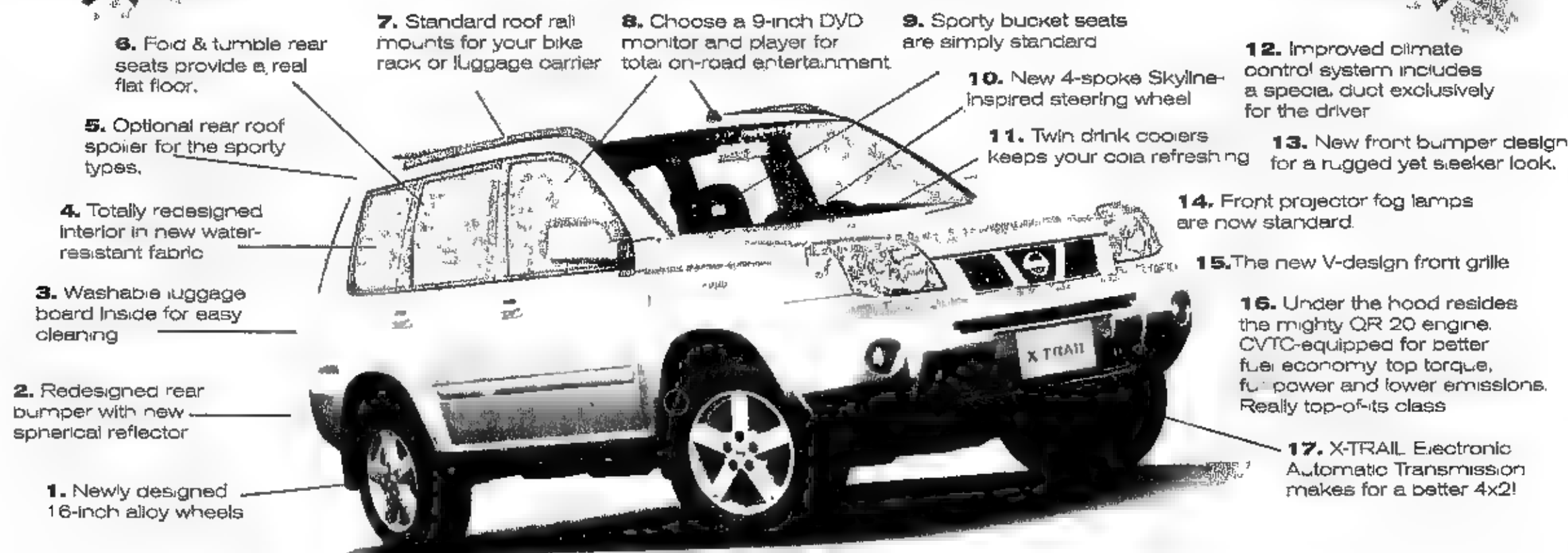
"We did not anticipate that it would be extremely physically demanding for a youngster to run in competitive races back-to-back," said Stefano's dad John, the former jetski champ. "But Stefano proved he was up to the challenge."



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SPORTS

Parker stars
as Spurs send
Bulls reeling

SAN ANTONIO—TONY PARKER SCORED 28 POINTS WEDNESDAY AS the San Antonio Spurs downed the struggling Chicago Bulls, 94-79, in a National Basketball Association contest Wednesday.

Michael Finley chipped in 15 points for the Spurs, who won despite the absence of Manu Ginobili, who was out with a sprained left index finger.

Parker shot 12-of-19 from the field in his second game, back after missing four contests with a sprained left ankle.

For the Bulls, it was a familiar result despite a sideline shakeup.

Coach Scott Skiles got the sack on Christmas Eve, so assistant Pete Myers was in charge as interim coach.

By halftime the Spurs led 51-39, pulling away with a 24-5 scoring run to launch the second quarter.

Bruce Bowen, Ime Udoka and Matt Bonner all scored 12 for the Spurs, while Tim Duncan notched eight points, 11 rebounds and six assists.

In East Rutherford, New Jersey, Richard Hamilton scored 22 points and Detroit shot 78 percent in the third quarter in beating New Jersey to

record its sixth straight victory, 101-83.

Hamilton hit all five of his shots and the Pistons connected on 14 of 18 from the field in turning a one-point half-time lead into a 14-point margin entering the final quarter.

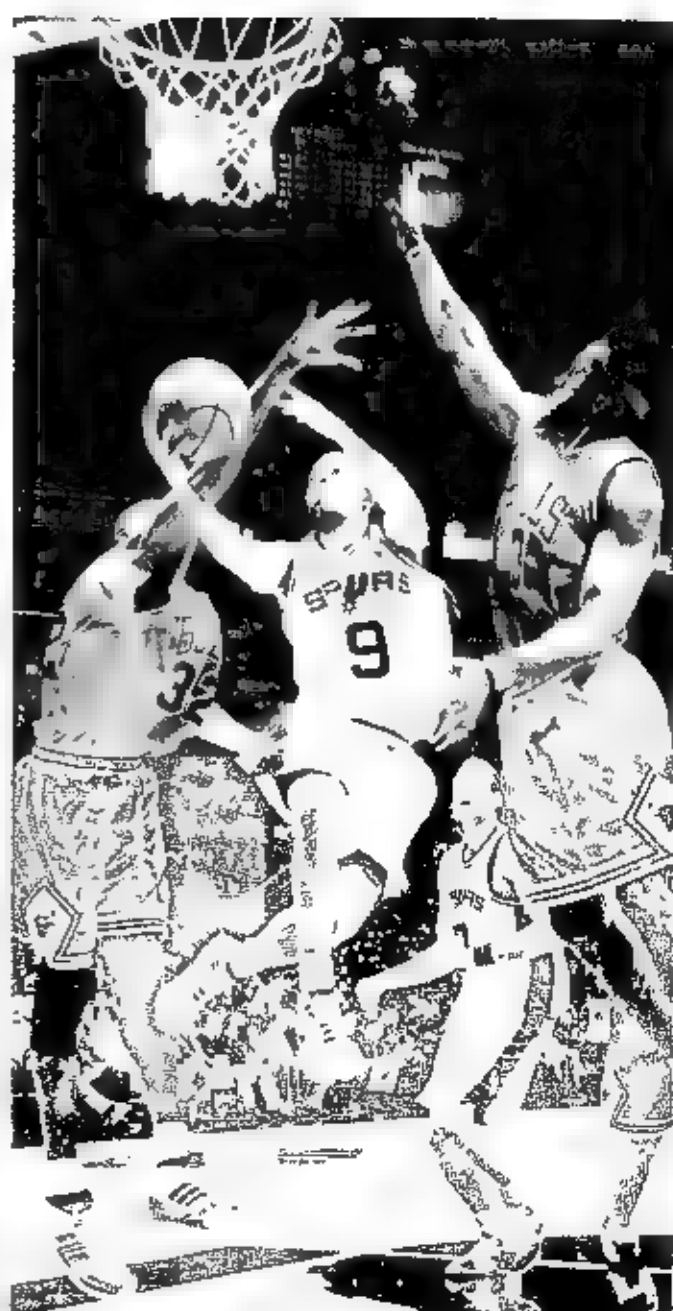
New Jersey was limited to 39 points in the second half on 12-of-32 shooting.

In Sacramento, California, Paul Pierce scored 14 of his 16 points during a dominating second-quarter run that carried Boston to its first win in Sacramento in more than 11 years, 89-69.

The Celtics played just their 11th road game of the season Wednesday.

The Celtics had lost 11 straight at Arco Arena dating back to 1996.

Other games: Memphis 116, New Orleans 90; Detroit 101, New Jersey 83; Boston 89, Sacramento 88; Atlanta 107, Indiana 95; Denver 125, Milwaukee 105; Utah 99, Dallas 90; Orlando 110, New York 96; Washington 108, Charlotte 104; Philadelphia 96, Miami 85; and Golden State 105, Minnesota 101. **APF**



SPURS' Tony Parker challenges the defense of Joe Smith (left) and Ben Wallace of the Chicago Bulls Wednesday. **APF**

Serbians No. 1 Hopman Cup pick

PERTH, AUSTRALIA—SERBIA WILL GO into the Hopman Cup as firm favorites when the tournament starts in Perth on Saturday, but the mixed teams tennis competition has a history of being unpredictable.

The Serbian pairing of Jelena Jankovic and Novak Djokovic contains the two highest ranked participants—both are third in world singles—and is the top seed for the cup.

But the competition's colorful 20-year his-

tory is full of major upsets as players are typically coming back for the new season and grappling with mixed doubles.

France's Gael Monfilis is a late withdrawal from the cup due to a knee problem. His replacement is former Australian Open finalist Arnaud Clement, whose partner will be the glamorous Tatiana Golovin.

The French team are in Group A with Serbia, Chinese Taipei and Argentina.

Meanwhile, American superstar Serena Williams has been replaced by Meghan Shaughnessy in the opening Group B tie against India on Saturday.

The French play the Serbians Wednesday. Argentina and Asian winner Chinese Taipei could also provide stiff competition.

The United States is seeded second, but India's Sania Mirza and Rohan Bopanna are sure to prove testing opposition. **APF**

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Wild Oats
heads for
3rd win
in a row

HOBART, AUSTRALIA—Sydney yacht Wild Oats XI increased its lead over the fleet Thursday, edging towards a third straight win in the Sydney to Hobart race.

Just over 28 hours into the race, Wild Oats, skippered by Mark Richards, was 219 nautical miles (405 kilometers) from the finish line at Constitution Dock in Hobart on the island state of Tasmania, covering about two-thirds of the race distance.

Computer forecasts based on current conditions indicated the maxi would finish the race shortly after midday Friday.

British yacht City Index Leopard was in second place, 19 nautical miles behind, followed by 2003 line honors winner Skandia. Race projections showed Leopard finishing three hours behind Wild Oats.

Ich. Ban was in fourth and American yacht Rosebud, skippered by owner Roger Sturgeon, in fifth.

"Things are going great," Wild Oats navigator Ian Burns said in an e-mail.

Wild Oats is attempting to match the feat of Morna, which won from 1946-48—the last yacht to win three in a row. **AP**

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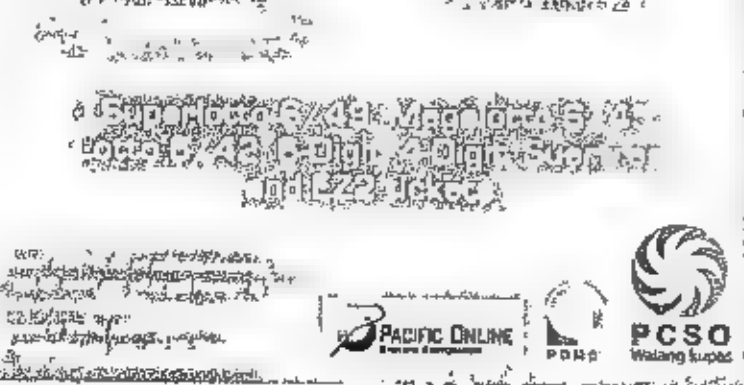
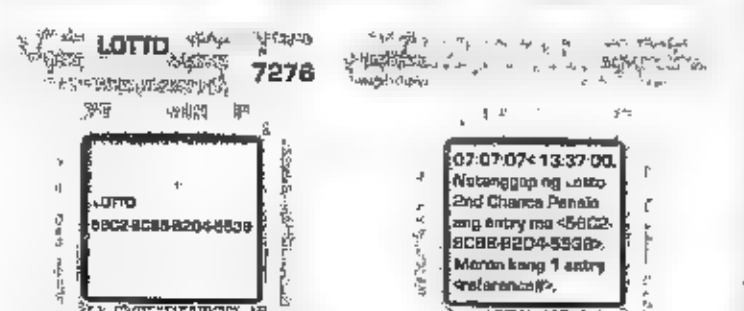
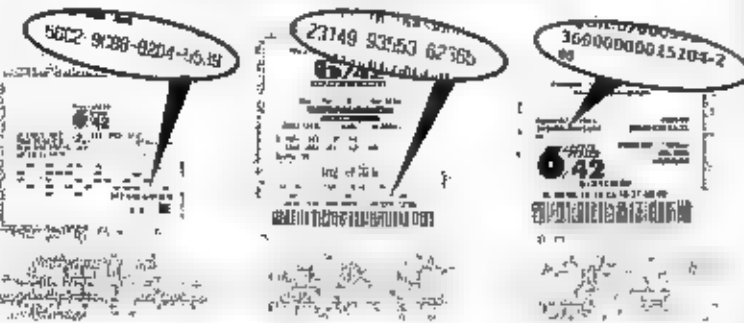


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\$3.3-B MRT-7 project approved

Biggest infrastructure deal gets Neda green light

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY gave the green light to the long-delayed Metro Rail Transit Phase 7 (MRT-7)

build-operate-transfer project, making it the single biggest infrastructure undertaking of the Arroyo administration.

The approval was given by the board of the National Economic and Development Authority after the pro-

ject proponent agreed to put up more than \$300 million as a performance bond—a constant sore point between the private sector consortium and the Department of Finance.

"The project was finally approved and we want this to start as soon as

possible," Economic Planning Secretary and NEDA Director General Augusto Santos said in a telephone interview.

The entire undertaking will cost at least \$3.3 billion—a price tag that includes the rail and road components, \$3.3-B MRT-7/B6

IN THIS ISSUE

■ **Mobile phone mart**

still growing /B3

■ **Gov't cuts BOC**

collection goal /B6

Agriculture makes a comeback in '07

By Amy R. Remo

(First of two parts)

PHILIPPINE AGRICULTURE POSTED A MAJOR comeback in 2007, growing faster than expected despite the ill-effects of typhoons, climate change, animal diseases, global supply shortfalls and market distortions.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said that despite the dry spell that lingered until late into the year, the local **YEARENDER** farm sector expanded by 5.7 percent in the third quarter, buoying government hopes of a much higher full-year economic growth.

In the first nine months, agriculture grew by 4.3 percent, with the fisheries subsector expanding by 7.92 percent to a production volume of 3.3 million metric tons.

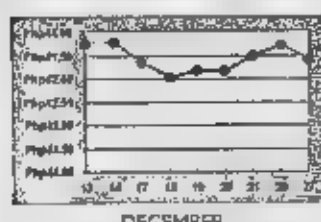
Yap expressed confidence that the farm sector would hit the Department of Agriculture's original target of 4.5-5 percent for this year.

"International institutions like the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are now bullish on the Philippines as joining the club of the region's fastest-growing economies this year and in 2008," Yap said

Five-point agenda

The DA said the impressive growth for AGRICULTURE/B5

INDICATORS CURRENCIES



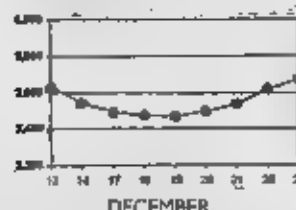
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P 41.60 = \$ 1

As of 5 p.m., Dec. 27, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares close 1.5% higher

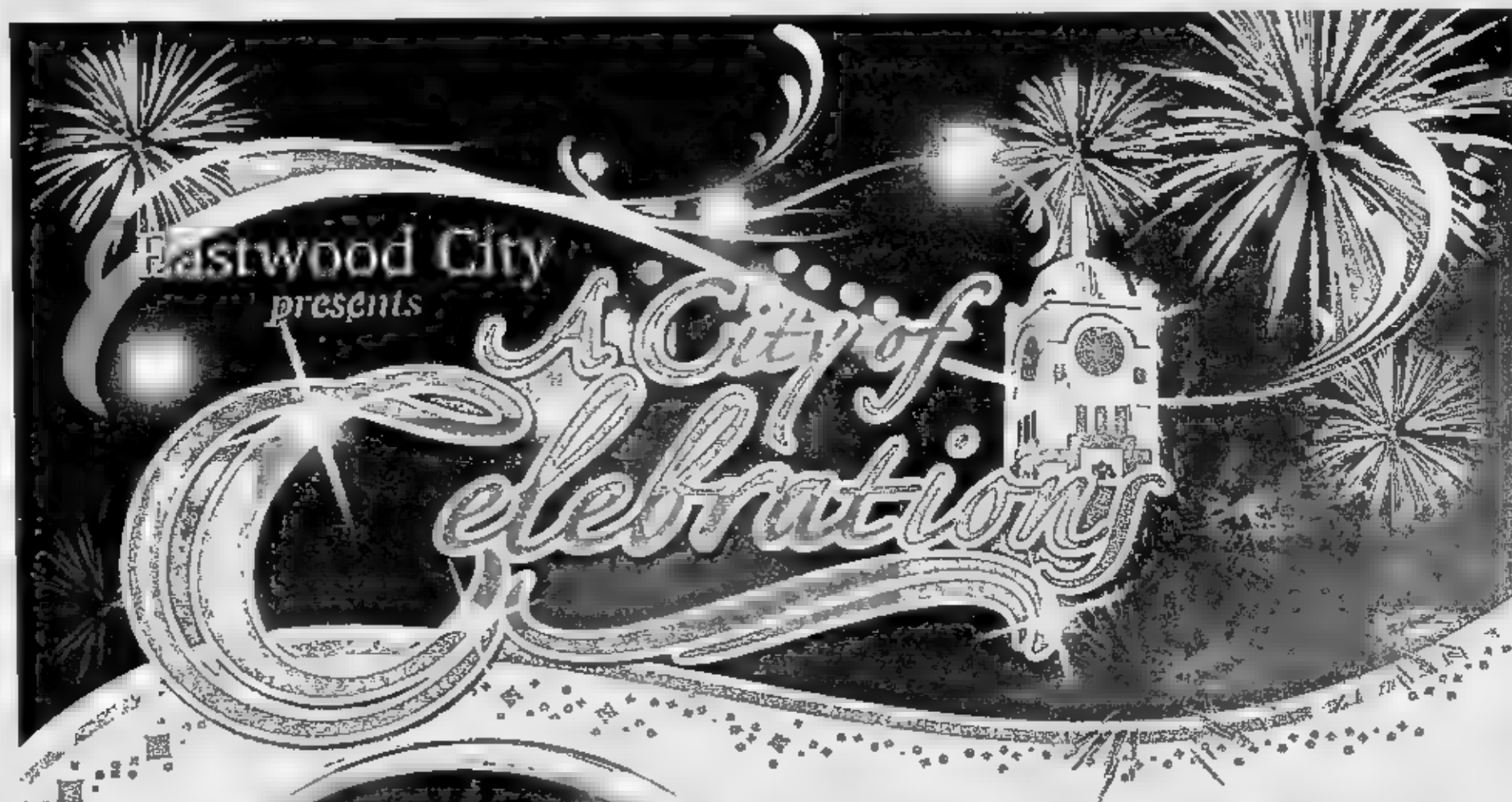
SHARE PRICES CLOSED 1.5-PERCENT higher yesterday as fund managers spruced up portfolios for the yearend, dealers said.

They said investors, however, were also cautious ahead of a four-day holiday break. Financial markets will be closed Monday and Tuesday next week for New Year celebrations. Trading resumes on Wednesday.

The composite index finished up 55.01 points at 3,667.64, its best close since Dec. 11 when it settled at 3,672.38. The broader all-share index gained 25.14 points or 1.1 percent to 2,243.12.

Gainers beat decliners 65 to 40, while 56 stocks ended flat. A total of 1.6 billion shares worth P3.1 billion changed hands. Trading was light, but gains in select blue chips led by Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) and conglomerate Ayala Corp., and in select mining stocks sent the benchmark to its best finish in more than two weeks.

"It was the continued window dressing that led today's rally. The selling pressure seems to have tapered off as most of the selling orders were filled last week," said Rommel Macapagal of Westlink Global Equities. **AFP**



Welcome the New Year where the celebrations never end. Bring family and friends to Eastwood City and kick off 2008 with a series of spectacular live shows and stunning visual displays.

Side A

Listen to breathtakingly soulful ballads.

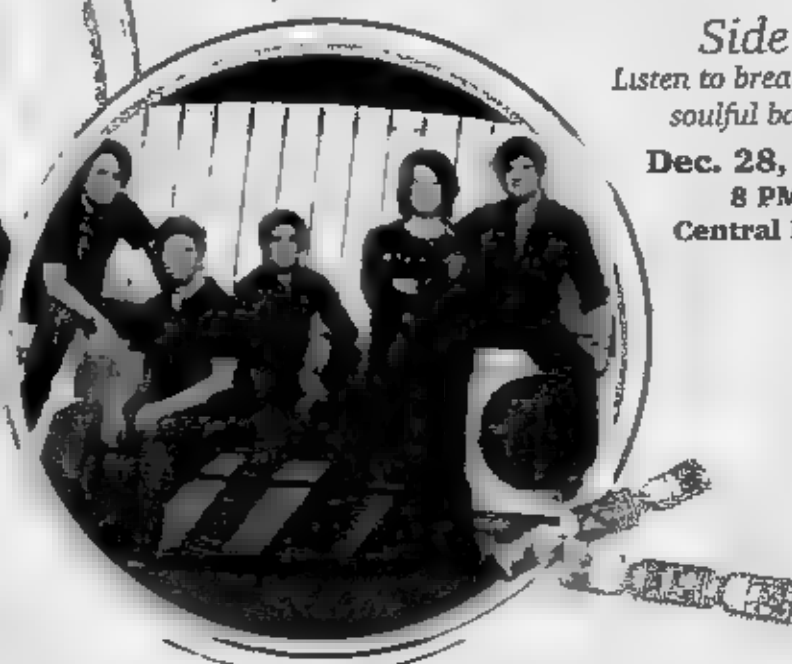
Dec. 28, Friday, 8 PM, Central Plaza



Regine Velasquez

Let the good times roll with Asia's Songbird.

Dec. 29, Saturday, 8 PM, Central Plaza



Countdown to 2008

Treat yourself to melodies from a variety of musical eras.

The following shows start on time on Dec. 31, Monday, at the Central Plaza:

6 PM Groove to '70s rock and roll music with **The Members**.

7:15 PM **The Bloomfields** brings to life the music from the golden '60s.

8:30 PM **Richard Poon** sings classics from the '50s.

10 PM Rock-alternative artist **LALA** debuts as Eastwood City's newest resident performer.

11:30 PM **The Rage Band** takes the stage with '80s new wave music.

12 MN Count down to the New Year with an exciting **Fireworks Display and Laser Lights Show**.

12:30 AM onwards Dance to Brazilian samba and house music in a street party featuring **Brigada and DJ Vhong**.

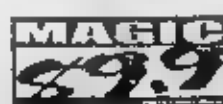
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MIDDLE-CLASS CONSUMER REVOLUTION

Modern women a leading force in China

A NEW SURVEY OF CHINA'S burgeoning middle class forecasts this influential sector will reach 100 million by 2016 from 35 million today. The groundbreaking survey is the result of a knowledge leadership partnership between HSBC and MasterCard Worldwide, while Fudan University in Shanghai was commissioned to design and implement the survey in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

Peter Wong, HSBC's executive director Hong Kong and Mainland China, said, "This survey is important because the growing middle class consumer segment in China will be one of the biggest in the world and will have a huge impact on many industries and services. As Mainlanders shift from a purely savings mentality to one of spending and investment, the opportunities will be plenty for many players including financial service providers."

The survey found, compared to a middle class average, modern women displayed a higher appetite for luxury goods, for buying property and they expect to make their investments work harder, with a higher expectation of investment returns.

The survey focused on the country's middle class and its two sub-segments: modern women and 'DINKs' (Double Income couples with No Kids). A total of 1,736 in-depth, face-to-face interviews were conducted from February to May 2007 in the three Mainland cities to identify the middle-class lifestyle, symbols of wealth and aspirations.

How middle class emerged

Dr. Yuwa Hedrick-Wong, economic advisor of MasterCard Worldwide in Asia-Pacific, who worked with HSBC to conceptualize the study, explained the emergence of the middle class in China, the majority of whom is found in the metropolitan areas. He said, "Robust economic growth over the past three decades has created a sizeable middle class in China today. The dramatic transformation of China's job market, driven increasingly by a private sector that offers more professional employment and higher income for those with the right educational qualifications, has lifted millions of households out of poverty and elevated them to middle class. In the coming decade,



VISITORS walk under Christmas decorations at a shopping mall in Hong Kong. AP

the role of a confident and expanding middle class will be even more crucial for China as they will raise domestic consumption demand, thus reducing China's current over-dependence on external demand."

Profile of middle class

In this survey, middle class is defined as those aged between 20 and 49 with annual personal incomes in the range of \$7,500 to \$25,000. About half (48 percent) reside in metropolitan areas with 17 percent in Beijing, 16 percent in Shanghai and 15 percent in Guangzhou.

Modern women and DINKs are two significant subsets of middle class. Modern women, currently estimated at 17.4 million in 2006 and likely to swell to 31.5 million in 2016, are urban-based and aged 30-44. In this survey, they must have completed college education and are professionally employed. DINKs (men aged from 22 to 45 and women from 20 to 40) are those who plan not to have children in the next three years. Predominantly located in Beijing and Shanghai, the population size of DINK households stood at approximately 600,000 in 2006 and is estimated to grow to 750,000 in 2016.

Modern women display the strongest appetite for luxury goods with 85 percent having purchased such items, followed by the middle class at 76 percent and DINKs at 75 percent. Forty-four

percent of modern women bought luxury goods for quality (vs 40 percent middle class and 38 percent DINKs) and they are the least price-sensitive (at price-conscious level of 3.5 vs middle class' 3.8 and DINKs' 3.9). Almost a quarter of all the three groups said they bought luxury goods to reward themselves (middle class 21 percent, modern women 22 percent and DINKs 23 percent). DINKs show the highest preference to buy for status (11 percent vs middle class' 10 percent and modern women's 8 percent).

Importance of property ownership

The survey showed modern women as having the highest incidence of owning their homes (86 percent vs 77 percent for middle class and 73 percent for DINKs). Of those who do not own property, only 18 percent (vs 30 percent of middle class and 26 percent of DINKs) could not afford and only 15 percent (vs 25 percent of middle class and 20 percent of DINKs) are living with parents. On property purchase plans, 53 percent of modern women plan to buy in the next 2 to 3 years while 57 percent of the middle class and 50 percent of DINKs want to do so.

At least half of the middle class are traveling for business and leisure. Modern women top the list of frequent travelers. Only 39 percent of them have not done any international busi-

ness travel (vs 46 percent for middle class and 52 percent for DINKs) and 34 percent have not gone on a personal overseas trip (vs 47 percent for middle class and 51 percent DINKs). One in five modern women have traveled overseas three times or more on business in a year (vs 13 percent for middle class and 14 percent for DINKs).

Dining out has also become a hallmark of the urban middle-class lifestyle in China.

On average, they go out for dinner three times a week, half of the time for business purposes. There are no stark differences across the segments.

Modern women are the leading force in mainland China middle-class consumer revolution.

Personal investment and insurance

The survey shows that traditional Chinese mentality still prevails as property and bank savings remain the most popular investments. Fifty-two percent of modern women hold property for investments vs 42 percent for both the middle class and the DINKs.

Thirty-six percent across the segments invest in term deposits.

Domestic stocks are, not surprisingly, popular for wealth growth. Thirty-eight percent of modern women invest in domestic stocks compared to 34 percent among middle class and 33 percent among DINKs. On insurance, the majori-

ty of the middle class own some form of insurance (life and non-life). For example, 67 percent of modern women have life insurance, higher than middle class' 62 percent and DINKs' 56 percent, while 58 percent of modern women have critical illness insurance (vs 52 percent for middle class and 49 percent for DINKs).

The overall usage of professional financial advisors is low among the three segments. Only 10 percent of modern women and 7 percent of both the middle class and the DINKs use this service.

Middle class aspirations

Modern women's strongest aspiration is to earn higher returns on investments (at 26 percent vs 25 percent for middle class and 22 percent for DINKs), followed by self-cultivation and improvement at 20 percent (vs 12 percent for middle class and 12 percent for DINKs). Half of DINKs aim to get career promotions (vs 41 percent middle class and 38 percent modern women). Thirty-six percent of DINKs and middle class hope to start their own business while only 22 percent of modern women intend to do so.

Peter Wong noted, "The middle class in China are evolving to become internationally oriented and mobile, lifestyle-conscious and ambitious in their careers and businesses. As they grow in affluence, they will propel consumption in China."

FEATURES IN BRIEF

Website for women entrepreneurs

GE MONEY BANK and Let's Go Foundation launched the Women Entrepreneurship (WE) website, www.womenentrepreneurship.org, a site dedicated to women who plan to start or are already managing their own businesses.

Apart from information on the women entrepreneurship program, the WE website features revealing studies done on women entrepreneurs, as well as success stories and tips on how to manage a business.

Interesting tidbits found in the website include the finding that 59 percent of women entrepreneurs with "growing" enterprises started their business with a partner or partners, and that there is a gap in female students' desire to put up a business and the knowledge and skills needed to effectively start one.

The WE website features experts who can answer women's questions on business.

Educating educators

on wellness

AROUND 900 educators and education stakeholders learned about health, safety and wellness during the 2nd MMLDC Educators' Forum with the theme "Kalusugan, Kaligtasan at Kagalingan ng ating Paaralan."

The forum, held at Mera.co Theater, provided a venue for discussing the current state of health and safety of educators, as well as a setting for sharing best practices in maintaining work-life balance.

"The forum (held at the Mera.co Theater) was designed to promote the belief that total wellness enhances learning, thus the promise of school improvement in the context of MMLDC's School-Based Management Development Program (SBMDP)," said Vivien Arnobit, MMLDC's director for academic services. "Understanding the current state of wellness of the country's educators will ground the need for better welfare support for them. It will encourage educators to enhance their leadership practices by modeling a well-balanced and healthy lifestyle. Ultimately, it will produce better educators, thus bringing forth better education for Filipinos."

Participants came from various offices of the Department of Education, MMLDC consul-

ants and resource persons also graced the forum.

DepEd Secretary Jesli A. Lapus, in his keynote address, shared an updated status of health and wellness of Filipino educators.

Healthy lifestyle advocate Cory Quirino spoke about wellness as a personal choice, rather than being affected by the stressors of society. "It is not the situation that creates stress, but how one reacts to that situation," she said. "People can choose to be negatively affected by a given situation, or they can choose not to. This mindset puts wellness right into their hands."

From personal wellness, there was a shift to a focus on managing risk in the school environment as Dr. Dulce Estrella-Gust took the podium. Her topic, "The Practice and Teaching of Health and Safety in Schools," highlighted the need to be aware of certain health and safety risks in the environment since it largely affects all of our wellness.

For inquiries on MMLDC's academic services and programs, call 632-8111 or e-mail mmldc.academic.services@meraco.com.ph, or visit website at www.mmldc.org.

Vidres.net wins Quill Award

VIDRES.NET, the Philippine-spearheaded online job matching facility that pioneered video resumes in Asia, was accorded an award of excellence in the recently held Philippine Quill Awards by the International Association of Business Communications (IABC).

Vidres.net was recognized under communication management, for its strategic communication efforts that demonstrated a full range of planning and management skills, including research, analysis, strategy, tactical implementation and evaluation.

Vidres.net offers a venue online to help job-seekers build their careers and assist employers in finding the right people to fit their requirements. In addition to a text-based resume, job-seekers may upload a video resume, which gives a face, a voice and personality to the application.

It was borne from the partnership between a team of specialists in IT and a group of experts in education, who recognized the need for a quicker and more efficient method of matching employers and employees.

Coco coir : A new gold mine from coconut husks

MATI, DAVAO ORIENTAL—HERMINO Malumay, 47, gathers all the coconut husks in one large pile at their coconut farm not far from the town of San Miguel, Davao Oriental. Big piles of coconut husks are usually left to rot or burnt as fuel in most Philippine coconut plantations, but not for Malumay this time.

"I never thought I could still earn some money from all these wastes," Malumay said smiling, wiping beads of sweat from his sun-burnt face with his arm.

Traders come with hauler trucks weekly to buy all the coconut husks from hundreds of farmers like Malumay all over Mindanao island to supply the raw materials of five coco fiber processing plants in the province. Malumay, whose main occupation is producing copra from his 10-hectare coconut farm, has added his income from selling the husks, as well as the coconut shells which he also sells to active carbon plants in Davao.

But it looks like coconut husks are beginning to show their biggest potential as a vital raw material to a new, emerging multimillion dollar industry—the new Philippine coco coir industry.

Coco coir is a durable fiber extracted from dried coconut husks by a decorticating machine that separates the fiber from the coco dust also known as "coco peat." The coco fiber or coir is widely used in making mattresses, cushion for car seats and expensive home furniture. They are also made into fiber sheets and mats used by ecologists as protective covers for soil and slopes to prevent erosion. The peat or coco dust, on the other hand, is packed into brick-shaped blocks and mixed with agri-wastes to produce natural, organic fertilizer.

China today is the world's biggest market for coco coir. The market demand for this coconut fiber is so huge and overwhelming, all the coco coir factories in the Philippines put together could hardly make a dent in the market.

"That's why it's so important for us to help our coco coir manufacturers come up with a cluster scheme to produce in bigger volumes and consolidate their supply to meet this big market demand for their product," says trade assistant secretary Merly M. Cruz.

Market demand for coco fiber mattresses in China is 100 million units yearly which is equivalent to 37,500 metric tons of coco coir every month or 450,000 MT annually.

The Philippine total export capacity is only about 3,000 MT of coco fibers a month from all the existing plants in the country combined, according to the Department of Trade and Industry.

The world's biggest suppliers of coco fibers today are India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh which have been producing the coir from coconut for many years.

Nevertheless, inquiries from several buyers in China, India and Greece are still streaming into the offices of Davao traders and exporters, all looking for reliable suppliers and exporters of coco coir in the Philippines. In one local export firm, Goldelyonn, a spokesperson said buyers from the China provinces of Qindao, Shenyang and Guangdong are looking to buy 50, 60, 70 containers monthly from any reliable suppliers worldwide. An importer from Greece, according to the company spokesperson, (goldelyonn@yahoo.com) wants to buy 60 containers of

40" FCL (full container load) every month. An export order for 70 containers is worth about \$1 million.

A huge demand for coco coir and geo-textiles is growing in China today as it prepares a countrywide beautification campaign for the hosting of the 2008 Olympics. China is losing about 2,400 square kilometers of land to fast-widening deserts and needs coco fibers to help solve their problem of covering 260,000 sq. km. of barren land.

Coco coir is priced around \$150 per metric ton, but this could still go up to \$600 per metric ton if the coir is converted into geotextiles. Last year the Philippines exported only about 10,000 MT of coco coir to China. One of the biggest export deals was made a few years ago by a Filipino firm Cocotextiles Inc. when it shipped 70 containers of coco coir, geotextiles, mats, biologists and coco peat—all worth one million US dollars.

"Our long-term goal is to supply our export markets with the right volumes on a consistent basis to help sustain this new emerging industry—it's now a gold mine for our coconut farmers," Cruz said.

A typical coco coir plant today could produce only about 40 to 50 MT of coco fiber every month, providing jobs to about 200 families. The government target is to generate jobs for at least 5,000 families, once production capacities of each coco coir plant reach the maximum.

Coconut trees cover about 25 percent or a quarter of the entire country's total land area. Some 30 million Filipinos today are dependent on the coconut industry.

Aurelio A. Pena, Philpress features

Sumilao formula: 3 S's and 5 P's

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

ALYANSA AGRIKULTURA, THE LARGEST farmer-fisherfolk coalition with 42 federations and organizations, is concerned about Sumilao because it may set the tone for future actions affecting small farmers and fisherfolk.

Some suggestions regarding Sumilao appear to make little sense and may even worsen the situation.

Thus, the following win-win formula is proposed.
SSS=PPPPP

Thus stands for Sensible Sumilao Solution = Purpose, Process, Product, Peace, Prosperity.

Purpose

Some contend that agrarian reform is synonymous to "land to the tiller." We take the broader view: The real purpose of agrarian reform is to improve the agrarian beneficiary's life.

Research shows, however, that when land is given to the tiller, the farmer is better off only if he gets the appropriate support services.

Unfortunately, when I was Department of Agriculture (DA) undersecretary, I personally witnessed so many situations when the DA could not provide the services because of a severely limited budget.

In those instances when the agrarian beneficiaries lost the former landowner's support services, which the government could not replace, the farmers could hardly survive. They were forced to sell their land and became worse off, thus defeating the real purpose of land reform.

In other cases, private sector firms like DOLE filled the gap. They helped with superior technology, economies of scale, and profitable markets. The beneficiaries still owned their land, but leased this out to the firms and worked in partnership with them. They often get incomes four times more than they previously got.

In the Sumilao case, the legitimate farmers should be given the land that is rightfully theirs. But if the real purpose of agrarian reform is to improve the farmer's life, we must realize that "land to the tiller" is just a means to that end.

If the end is not achieved because of no support services, then true agrarian reform is subverted instead of accomplished.

The Sumilao farmers should look to San Miguel Corp. (SMC) with its world class support services as a partner, rather than an adversary. SMC should likewise realize the benefits of dealing with these farmers.

Given SMC's own estimated project cost of P2.4 billion, paying rent for the farmers' land may amount to only 1 to 2 percent of this cost. SMC can then continue with its project, at the same time contributing significantly to the real purpose of agrarian reform.

Process

With the agrarian reform purpose clear, a process must be instituted to achieve this end. We may be in the brink of a breakdown when the farmers themselves are not involved enough in this process.

This may be happening already, as evidenced by the main INQUIRER headline last

Dec. 23: "3-Party talks on Sumilao: Church, Palace, SMC haggle over price of land." Where are the farmers in this process?

This is precisely why the Alyansa Agrikultura was organized in 2003: To help ensure that the farmers' voice would be heard. Without the farmers in the process, even well intentioned people may not express the farmers' position accurately, thus giving the impression that farmers are ignorant and unrepresentative.

When asked what would happen to the land where an SMC hog farm was being built, a Malacañang official was quoted as saying "Walang matitira (Nothing will be left)." It is probable that if the farmers themselves were asked, they would give a different answer and regard the hog farm as beneficial to them. A rental fee could be agreed upon, similar to what DOLE is now giving agrarian reform beneficiaries, to the advantage of both parties.

Product

If the purpose is clear and the appropriate process implemented, a win-win product will likely emerge. There are two important "product" issues that should be addressed.

The first is that the law should be followed, which potential investors will appreciate. This means that the land should be given to the farmers. This is consistent with the arguments given by legal luminaries such as former Ateneo Law Dean Father Joaquin Bernas SJ, and supported by an order from the Office of the President.

The second issue is that only legitimate claimants should get the land. If it is true that some of those who marched are not the rightful beneficiaries, they should be immediately replaced.

However, the possible presence of illegitimate claimants should not be used as an excuse to avoid the real issue of securing social justice. As printed on the Sumilao T-shirts, there are still 433,000 landless farmers in our country.

Peace and Prosperity

Sumilao can be a disaster. But it can also be a beacon of hope, showing how potential adversaries can unite in a win-win situation. With the right purpose, process and product, peace and prosperity will naturally follow. There will be peace because there will be no aggrieved party. The farmers can get their land, and SMC can continue its project.

There will be prosperity for all. With the goodwill earned by SMC and the Sumilao community squarely behind it, SMC can look towards prosperous times. The Sumilao farmers may well bless the day they partner with SMC, for they will get support services that may include access to technology, economies of scale and profitable markets.

Peace and prosperity can then reign, not only in Sumilao but in the rest of the country.

(The author is the chair of Agriwatch, former secretary for Presidential Undersecretary for Projects, and former undersecretary for Agriculture, and Trade and Industry. For inquiries and suggestions, e-mail agriwatch-phil@yahoo.com or telefax (02) 8522112.)

Agriculture makes a comeback in '07

From page B1

2007 was due to its five-point farm agenda and other timely measures like the quick turnaround planting program, which contained the devastating impact of both natural and man-made calamities on farms.

The agenda included higher investments in irrigation and other infrastructure; post harvest facilities; research and development and agricultural extension work; rural credit, and the opening of more local and international markets for local produce.

Government spending for irrigation this year reached P3.1 billion, including foreign-assisted and locally financed projects.

As a result, the National Irrigation Administration was able to rehabilitate and repair irrigation facilities covering 53,758 hectares of arable land. The DA has earlier targeted 55,000 hectares.

As for farm-to-market roads, the DA built this year 1,616.76 kilometers of roads worth P3.2 billion.

To guarantee the quality of Philippine farm products and reduce post-production losses, the DA has earmarked P1 billion for about 1,000 units of various types of mechanical grain dryers, integrated post harvest processing centers and cold-chain facilities in major trading points.

In the area of R&D, the DA embarked on extensive studies on new technologies to further raise yields and planting areas through its various Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (GMA) programs.

GMA programs

For 2007, the outlay for the GMA Rice Program had reached P1.78 billion, enabling the DA to provide P1.05 billion worth of assistance to a million farmers in the form of production support services.

This led to an expansion in the total area planted to rice to 4.27 million hectares.

As for the GMA Corn Program, the P819-million allotment this year enabled the DA to extend P752 million worth of aid to corn farmers through production support, post-harvest and irrigation development services.

This led to an expansion in the total area planted to corn to 45,997 hectares.

But this year's defining moment for the DA was its ability to contain the adverse effects of the prolonged dry spell during the middle of the year, through its quick turnaround planting program.

The QTA program identified and made use of almost 100,000 hectares of arable land in non-affected farms in Visayas and Mindanao.

As a result, the DA managed to add 350,000 MT of paddy and 200,000 MT of corn to this year's production.

As part of the emergency program, the DA provided P153 million worth of aid to about 67,000 affected farmers in the form of small water-impounding facilities, seed subsidies, shallow tube wells, cloud-seeding operations and repair of irrigation facilities.

In part, the program helped push for the local agriculture sector's impressive growth in the past three quarters.

New markets

This year, Yap put up agricultural trade desks to help overseas-based attaches in tapping more investments and markets for Philippine agricultural goods.

The DA also spearheaded the country's participation in several food exhibits and trade shows in Asia and Europe, which led to buying commitments for Philippine fruits, vegetables and processed food products.

Export winners like mangoes and other high value commercial crops were able to penetrate more overseas markets this year, following the DA's efforts to ensure compliance with internationally accepted sanitary and phytosanitary standards.

In the case of mangoes, the DA was able to pave the way for the opening of new markets for this prime Philippine fruit export in the United States and China.

New markets for non-traditional Philippine exports like carageenan had been opened to include the Bahamas, Cambodia, Curacao, Greece, Guatemala, Jordan, Nicaragua, Nigeria and Ukraine. (To be continued)

Changyu Red Wines

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
SEC Bldg. EDSA, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila
CORPORATION FINANCE DEPARTMENT

SEC 4700-017R No. 194
April 14, 2007
Registration of Securities under
the Securities Regulation Code

IN THE MATTER OF THE
FIRST METRO SAVE & LEARN
EQUITY FUND, INC.

Reg'd to sell

ORDER

Upon consideration of the Registration Statement and other papers and documents attached thereto which were filed for and on behalf of FIRST METRO SAVE & LEARN EQUITY FUND, INC., the Commission, in its meeting of December 5, 2007, resolved to render effective the same for the registration of the company's One Hundred Fifty Million (150,000,000) common shares with a par value of P 10 each, representing the latest increase of its authorized capital stock, subject to compliance with the reporting and other requirements of the Securities Regulation Code, Investment Company Act and their implementing rules and regulations, Code of Corporate Governance and to further orders of the Securities and Exchange Commission and to applicable regulations of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

A Certificate of Permit to Offer Securities for Sale authorizing the sale of said securities is issued with this Order.

Let a copy of this ORDER be published at the expense of the corporation once a week for two (2) consecutive weeks in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines within (10) days from the date of this ORDER. The subject company is hereby directed to furnish the Commission with a copy of the affidavit of publication of this ORDER.

SO ORDERED,
December 14, 2007, EDSA, Greenhills, City of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines.

JUSTIN M. ALANAN
Director

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PREMYO SA RESIDO

LIBRE

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Monday, 7:30 AM NEN 4, NPN 9 & IBC 13

One morning!

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IN THE MATTER OF THE
APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF
THE RATES ADJUSTMENT IN
ACCORDANCE WITH THE
PROVISIONS OF R.A. 9136, WITH
PRAYER FOR PROVISIONAL
AUTHORITY

ERC CASE NO. 2007-152 RC

SURIGAO DEL SUR ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE, INC. (SURSECO I),
Applicant,
x-----x

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES.

Notice is hereby given that on October 18, 2007, the Surigao del Sur I Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SURSECO I) filed an application for the Commission's approval of its Rates Adjustment in accordance with Republic Act No. 9136, with prayer for provisional authority.

- In its application, SURSECO I, alleges, among others, the following:
1. The steep rise in SURSECO I's operation and maintenance expenses and other costs has made it imperative to adjust its rates in order to achieve its updated revenue requirements. The proposed revenue requirements will not be attained if SURSECO I continues to use its existing unbundled rates of 2000;
 2. There is a substantial adjustment in the revenue requirement for Operation and Maintenance because of inflationary/economic factors: official government data show a sharp increase in costs from 2000 to 2005 (e.g. fuel alone has risen by 300% compared to prices in 2000). The Payroll portion of the SURSECO I's operation and maintenance cost is the actual cost incurred for the 2005 test year.
 3. The adjustment for debt service is aimed at recovering the existing loans with National Electrification Administration (NEA) that were availed of after June 26, 2001, which were not included in the loans condoned by Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation (PSALM Corp.); and
 4. SURSECO I proposed a subsidy from non-lifeline consumers in the amount of PhP 0.1193/kWh.

Summarized below is the proposed schedule of rates and the estimated impact of the rate adjustment applied for on each customer class of the Distribution Utility:

Customer Class	Proposed Rates	Existing Rates	Difference
Residential:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	1.2939	1.2597	0.0342
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.6588	0.5588	0.1000
Metering System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.1921	0.4908	(0.2987)
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)	20.0000	5.0000	15.0000
Loan Condensation (Peso/Customer/Month)		(0.4807)	0.4807
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	2.1448	1.9285	0.2163
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	20.0000	5.0000	15.0000
Average Rate Per kWh	2.5229	2.0231	0.4998
Small Commercial:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.9240	0.8913	0.0327
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	38.2500	38.2500	0.0000
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)	48.2000	48.2000	0.0000
Loan Condensation (Peso/Customer/Month)		(0.2709)	0.2709
Loan Condensation (Peso/Customer/Month)		(0.9738)	0.9738
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	0.9240	0.6204	0.3036
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	84.4500	57.4762	26.9738
Average Rate Per kWh	1.4217	1.0652	0.3565
Large Commercial:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.7967	0.7479	0.0488
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	36.9700	36.9700	0.0000
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)	79.0200	79.0200	0.0000
Loan Condensation (Peso/Customer/Month)		(0.2284)	0.2284
Loan Condensation (Peso/Customer/Month)		(14.4269)	14.4269
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	0.7967	0.5195	0.2772
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	115.9900	101.5631	14.4269
Average Rate Per kWh	0.9023	0.6120	0.2903
Industrial:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	19.8000	19.8000	0.0000
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.8462	0.8091	0.0371
Metering System Charge (Peso/kWh)	104.3300	104.3300	0.0000
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)	268.8800	268.8800	0.0000
Loan Condensation (Peso/Customer/Month)		(0.2818)	0.2818
Loan Condensation (Peso/Customer/Month)		(48.0812)	48.0812
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	19.8000	19.8000	0.0000
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	98.6100	87.8628	10.7472
Average Rate Per kWh	1.2221	0.8511	0.3710
Public Building:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.8663	0.7720	0.0943
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	35.7400	35.7400	0.0000
Metering System Charge (Peso/kWh)	63.8700	63.8700	0.0000
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)		(0.2348)	0.2348
Loan Condensation (Peso/Customer/Month)		(11.7472)	11.7472
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	0.8663	0.5372	0.3291
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	98.6100	87.8628	10.7472
Average Rate Per kWh	1.2221	0.8511	0.3710
Street Light:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	2.7345	2.3800	0.3545
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	35.9700	35.9700	0.0000
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)	30.1600	25.2200	4.9400
Loan Condensation (Peso/Customer/Month)		(0.2613)	0.2613
Loan Condensation (Peso/Customer/Month)		(0.5965)	0.5965
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	2.7345	2.1187	0.6158
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	66.1300	61.5915	4.5385
Average Rate Per kWh	2.6173	2.1991	0.4182
Other:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.6304	0.1519	0.4785
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	36.5000	36.5000	0.0000
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)	141.5200		141.5200
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)		(0.0463)	0.0463
Loan Condensation (Peso/Customer/Month)		(0.4914)	0.4914
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	0.6304	0.1056	0.5248
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	178.0200	36.0086	142.0114
Average Rate Per kWh Charge	0.6679	0.1132	0.5547
Over-all Average Rate Per kWh	2.0738	1.6283	0.4455

The Commission has set the application for initial hearing, pre-trial conference, expository presentation and evidentiary hearing on January 17 to 18, 2008 (Thursday and Friday) at two o'clock in the afternoon (2:00 P.M.) and ten o'clock in the morning (10:00 A.M.), respectively, at SURSECO I's Office at Barangay San Fernando, City of Bislig, Surigao del Sur.

All persons who have an interest in the subject matter of the proceeding may become a party by filing, at least five (5) days prior to the initial hearing and subject to the requirements in the ERC's Rules of Practice and Procedure, a verified petition with the Commission giving the docket number and the title of the proceeding and stating: (1) the petitioner's name and address; (2) the nature of petitioner's interest in the subject matter of the proceeding, and the way and manner in which such interest is affected by the issues involved in the proceeding; and (3) a statement of the relief desired.

All other persons who may want their views known to the Commission with respect to the subject matter of the proceeding may file their opposition to the application or comment thereon at any stage of the proceeding before the applicant concludes the presentation of its evidence. No particular form of opposition or comment is required, but the document, letter or writing should contain the name and address of such person and concise statement of the opposition or comment and the grounds relied upon.

All such persons who may wish to have a copy of the application may request the applicant, prior to the date of the initial hearing, that they be furnished with a copy of the application. The applicant is hereby directed to furnish all those making such request with copies of the application and its attachments, subject to reimbursement of reasonable photocopying costs. Likewise, any such person may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS, the Honorable RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR., Chairman, and the Honorable Commissioners, ALEJANDRO Z. BARIN, RAUF A. TAN, MARIA TERESA A.R. CASTANEDA and JOSE G. REYES, Energy Regulatory Commission, this 22nd of November, 2007 at Pasig City.

(Sgd.) FRANCIS SATURNINO C. JUAN
Executive Director

PRC - December 21 & 28, 2007

Gov't cuts BOC collection goal 2008 target now down by P19 billion to P235.68B

By Michelle V. Remo

THE CONTINUED STRENGTHENING OF the peso has prompted the national government to slash by about P19 billion the collection target of the Bureau of Customs for 2008.

From the original target of P254.48 billion, a source from the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) said the government brought down the collection target for BOC to P235.68 billion.

The source said the DBCC, an inter-agency body that sets the country's macroeconomic and fiscal goals, was expected to announce the revision soon.

The reduction in the BOC's collection target followed an earlier decision of the DBCC to revise its DBCC-exchange assumption for 2008. The DBCC had originally assumed that the exchange rate would average be-

tween 47 and 49 versus the US dollar. It later revised this to between 42 and 45 to \$1.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales earlier said it was unfair to ask the BOC to meet the original target if the peso would continue to strengthen.

Based on BOC calculation, he said, the bureau was losing P2.7 billion in potential revenue for every unit of appreciation of the local currency against the US dollar.

According to DBCC estimates, the BOC was losing P3 billion for every unit of appreciation of the peso.

The amount of duties and taxes collected by the BOC is based on the peso value of imports. The strengthening of the local currency, therefore, means lesser collection in peso terms.

The cut in the BOC's target also came after the DBCC reduced its imports growth forecast for 2008 from 11 to 9 percent. This

took into account the expected slowdown in global demand, which would result in lower exports and reduced need for imported raw materials.

In the meantime, the DBCC raised the collection target of the Bureau of Internal Revenue for next year by P500 million. From the original goal of P844.9 billion, the BIR is now tasked to collect P844.95 billion next year.

The DBCC official said the BIR's target had to be increased because the economic growth forecast was revised upward.

The economy, in terms of gross domestic product, was originally expected to grow by between 6.1 and 6.8 percent, but is now seen to expand by between 6.3 and 7 percent.

The growth in BIR collection is supposedly directly proportional to that of the economy's. This is because a higher economic growth means an increase in taxable corporate and household income.

Including the collection goals of other agencies, the government's tax revenue target for next year was placed at P1.09 trillion. The original target was placed at P1.109 trillion.

Strong peso stunts export growth this year

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE EXPORT SECTOR IS SEEN TO POST A mere 6-percent growth this year as industry members, especially small-scale businesses, reel from the impact of the rising peso on their earnings.

Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr., president of the Philippine Exporters Confederation, said in an interview that the sector would not be able to meet the target of 8 percent for the whole year.

Ortiz-Luis said such a performance was telling of how exporters were really suffering from the appreciation of the peso, considering that the industry had set an original growth target of 11 percent at the start of the year.

"Aside from foreign exchange, factors affecting growth include the weakening of the market, particularly that of the United States," he said.

In PhilEx's online publication, Ortiz-Luis was quoted as saying that a growth rate of 6 percent was "still possible," adding that even if shipments in November and December grew, this would not make a significant impact on the overall exports revenue for the year.

Ortiz-Luis noted that exports growth for the 10 months ending in October averaged 5.4 percent despite the double-digit 10.5-percent growth in October.

"The figures in October are deceptive (because) deliveries were ordered three months back when the dollar was at about P44," he said. "Paid when the forex rate was nearing P42 to the dollar, October deliveries were made at a loss."

Earlier this month, PhilEx renewed calls for export groups to tap a P250-million fund to counter effects of a continually rising peso.

\$3.3-B MRT . . . From page B1

as well as commercial and real estate development around the route of the rail system.

The main proponent, Universal LRT Corp., brings together the resources of the SM Group of Companies, Megawold Corp. and Israeli businessman Eli Levavi. International Finance Corp., the private funding arm of the World Bank, has also shown interest in funding the enterprise either through a soft loan or an equity investment, Santos said.

The scheme calls for a 20-kilometer light rail system integrated with a 20-kilometer highway that will link the North Triangle area in Quezon City with San Jose del Monte in Bulacan.

"So all in all, this will be a 40-kilometer project and will come at no cost to the government (since it would be funded through the BOT scheme)," Santos explained.

The rail and road network is expected to cost as much as \$1.3 billion, while the commercial and residential developments that are expected to rise along the route would cost another \$2 billion.

Santos said the breakthrough came after ULC agreed to put up a 10-percent performance bond for the rail and road project component, plus another 10-percent bond for the property development side.

The finance department had long insisted on the bond, saying it was necessary to protect the government's interests in case the consortium failed to implement the contract fully.

The amount required for the bond has come down significantly from the \$450 million being quoted by finance officials in recent years.

"So they have now agreed to put up a bond of more than \$300 million," Santos said.

The Neda chief cautioned, however, that the project still faced important hurdles ahead since the final implementation would only start after a BOT contract has been hammered out between the consortium and the government.

"The devil is in the details, so we will have to see how the contract will turn out," he said, adding that the primary negotiator for the government side would be the finance department, which has long looked askance at the project.



Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

Bids and Awards Committee for Consultancy Services

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE REHABILITATION OF THE ELECTRICAL SYSTEM AND FIRE PROTECTION AND ALARM SYSTEM IN THE SUPREME COURT BUILDINGS

The Supreme Court of the Philippines, through its Bids and Awards Committee for Consultancy Services (BACCS), intends to engage the services of a Consultant to undertake the Detailed Engineering Design for the Rehabilitation of Electrical System and Fire Protection and Alarm System in the Supreme Court Buildings through open competitive bidding.

The following are the relevant information on the Project:

Name of Project	Detailed Architectural and Engineering Design for the Rehabilitation of Electrical System and Fire Protection and Alarm System in the Supreme Court Buildings
Approved Budget for the Contract	P2,450,000.00 Design Consultancy Fee
Source of Funding	Judiciary Development Fund
Contract Duration	Two and a half (2 1/2) months Design Development Phase Ten (10) months Contract Supervision

Interested bidders should signify their interest by personally submitting a Letter of Intent and ten (10) copies thereof to the Bids and Awards Committee for Consultancy Services c/o Office of the Chief Attorney 9th floor of the Supreme Court Centennial Building, Padre Faura Street, Manila at 4:00 p.m. on or before January 11, 2008. Eligibility forms and Terms of Reference (TOR) shall be available at cost upon the submission of said Letter of Intent.

Eligibility requirements must be submitted in one (1) original and ten (10) copies not later than 4:00 p.m. on January 16, 2008. Eligibility of prospective bidders shall be checked using the non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Shortlisting of eligible consultants will be based on the following criteria: experience of the consultant (50%), qualification of personnel (30%), and current workload (20%). A maximum of five (5) eligible bidders shall make up the shortlist. The quality cost-based selection procedure shall be adopted. The technical proposal shall carry 70% weight while the financial proposal shall have a 30% weight. Bid documents shall be available at cost.

Should you be interested, you may schedule an ocular inspection of the premises prior to the submission of your bid by coordinating in advance with Engr. Bernardino R. Bundoc, SC Maintenance Division at telephone nos. 525-57-69 or 525-72-60.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of the Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of activities is as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Submission of Letter of Intent and Application for Eligibility	January 11, 2008 at 4:00 p.m.
2. Submission of Eligibility Requirements	January 16, 2008 at 4:00 p.m.
3. Pre-bid Conference	January 28, 2008 at 2:00 p.m.
4. Submission and Opening of Bids	February 11, 2008 at 9:00 a.m.

The Supreme Court reserves the right to reject documents which do not comply with the requirements

(Sgd.) EDNA E. DWIO
Chairperson

(PR) - Dec 28, 2007



Development Bank of the Philippines

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Re-Bid Construction of New DBP Marbel Branch Building

1. The Development Bank of the Philippines, Marbel Branch through its 2007 Corporate Budget intends to apply the sum of Eight Million being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for The Construction of a New DBP Marbel Branch Building. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.
2. The Development Bank of the Philippines, Marbel Branch now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential bidders to apply for eligibility for The Construction of a New Branch of the Building. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested bidders must submit their LOIs on or before January 17, 2008 at DBP, Marbel Branch, Koronadal City and secure the Eligibility Documents therefrom. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents on January 24, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. at DBP, Marbel Branch, Koronadal City. Only those bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, only Bids from eligible bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.
4. Interested bidders shall submit their accomplished Eligibility Documents to the BAC Secretariat at DBP, Marbel Branch, Koronadal City on or before January 24, 2008 at 10:00 A.M.
5. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from Development Bank of the Philippines, Marbel Branch and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on or before January 28, 2008.
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Three Thousand Five Hundred (P3,500.00) Pesos. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative on February 24, 2008. It shall be available from January 28, 2008 and seven days thereafter.
7. The Development Bank of the Philippines, Marbel Branch will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on February 5, 2008, 10:00 a.m. at DBP, Marbel Branch, Koronadal City.
8. Eligible bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before February 15, 2008, 10:00 a.m. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of Cash or Irrevocable Letter of Credit or Surety Bond and in the amount of 1.0%, 1.0% & 2.5% of ABC, respectively or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on February 15, 2008, 2:00 p.m. at DBP, Marbel Branch, Koronadal City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 2:00 p.m. on February 15, 2008.
9. Completion of Works is within 180 days from the Notice to Proceed.
10. The Development Bank of the Philippines, Marbel Branch reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

DBP Marbel Branch
NOECHITA ARDAYA
Koronadal City
Tel. #: (083) 228-2429/228-3118
Fax #: (083) 228-3667

(Sgd.) ATTY. ELVIE EULLARAN-ALBANO
BAC Chairman

PRD - December 21 & 28, 2007

**I am
the way,
the truth
and
the life.
No one
comes
to the
Father
except
through
Me.**

John 14:6

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● Any identification
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PACIFICO LI. MAYOR

Former Mayor of Ferrol, Romblon
BORN ON MAY 11, 1943
DIED DECEMBER 26, 2007

WIFE:
ADELAIDA ALDANA MAYOR

CHILDREN:
ALFRED & FRAN LOTLOT & DANNY, ANTHONY, JOSEPH

GRANDCHILDREN:
KEVIN, KENNETH, DAVE, KELSEY, KERSTIN & ALYSSA

HIS BODY LIES IN STATE AT HOLY TRINITY MEMORIAL
CHAPEL, DR. A SANTOS AVE., SUCAT, PARAÑAQUE.
INTERMENT WILL BE ON
DECEMBER 29, 2007, SATURDAY AT 1:00 P.M. AT
MANILA MEMORIAL PARK, SUCAT, PARAÑAQUE.

*I came so that they might have life and have it
more abundantly. — John 10:10*

Dr. Teresita "Telly" Casaclang Perez

of Caloocan Norte, Birmaley Pangasinan
peacefully joined our Lord
on December 23, 2007 at the age of 75.

Her loving husband Brig. Gen. Valerio Perez; children
Rosemarie, Teodorico, Teresa, Carol, Jojo, Gica, Gene
and daughters and sons-in-law Barry, Susan, Leah,
Marie, Nilda, Raymond, Buddy, Gloria together with
brothers Noli and Edith, Lito, Camilo and Pepe,
grandchildren, relatives and friends, request the pious
comforts to pray for the eternal repose of her soul and
comfort for the family.

Her remains lie in state at Caloocan Norte, Birmaley,
Pangasinan.

Mass will be held on December 30, 2007, 2 p.m. at the
Birmaley Parish church. Interment will follow right
after at Birmaley Memorial Park.

DEATH NOTICE**NELSON ABEL DY LOA**

February 18, 1941 - December 23, 2007

Peacefully joined our Creator at the age of 66

His remains lie in state at the Arlington Memorial Chapels, Inc. #12 G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City
Cremation will be on Sunday, December 30, 2007, 1:00 PM at the Chinese Crematory Manila

Secretary Arturo D. Brion
and the Officials and Staff of the
Department of Labor and Employment

*express their deepest condolences
to the family and friends
of*

Adrian E. Cristobal, Sr.

*Former Labor Secretary, SSS Chairman,
Presidential Spokesman, Academician, Publisher,
Journalist, and Writer*

*who joined our Creator last December 22, 2007
at the age of 75.*

*A funeral mass is scheduled at the
Santuario de San Antonio
in Forbes Park, Makati City
on December 28, 2007.*

*The entire DOLE Family mourns the passing away
of one of the country's greatest intellectuals
and devoted public servant, and asks everyone
to offer prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.*

CLASSIFIEDS

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
3rd Floor PCA Bldg. Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO RE-BID

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Department of Agriculture (DA-BFAR) invites bona fide suppliers to apply for eligibility and to re-bid for "Eleven (11) units Computer Desktop, One (1) unit Laptop and Fourteen (14) Units Fortigate 60 Bundle" with an Approved Budget Contract (ABC) Pnp2,022,000.00

The Bid documents shall be available at the BFAR Property Section starting January 3 to January 9, 2008 upon payment of non-refundable fee in the amount of P1,000.00

Eligibility documents, technical and financial proposals in three envelopes must be submitted to the BFAR-BAC Secretariat, PCA Compound, Diliman, Quezon City not later than 2:00 PM on January 17, 2008 and shall be opened at the Office of the BFAR-BAC Chairman, 3rd Flr, PCA Main Building, Diliman, Quezon City, on the same date in the presence of the participating bidders who wish to attend.

For more information, please call the BAC-Secretariat at Tel. No. 425-31 88
BFAR reserves the right to waive any informality in the response to the eligibility requirements and to this invitation. BFAR further reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or declare a failure, or not award the contract and makes no assurance that contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) MALCOLM I. SARMIENTO, JR.
Director

PDI - Dec 28, 2007

**PTJLI TO CONGRESS:
Restore 08 Judiciary's Budget**

The Philippine Trial Judges League Inc. composed of first level court judges throughout the country thru its national President Judge Kaudri L. Jainul politely demands that Congress, through its Bicameral Conference Committee, restore the proposed 2008 Judiciary's Budget to its original P141.34 Billion.

PTJLI added that the Judiciary is entitled to respect, being a co-equal branch in a republican state like ours. The Judiciary does not possess "the purse and the sword" but is the nation's final arbiter in resolving constitutional conflicts between the Congress and the Executive

PTJLI further said that the judiciary, being the Third Pillar of Democracy, enjoys fiscal autonomy. Salaries of Judges cannot compare with those of their foreign counterparts nor with those of the lawyers in the private sector. Their salaries should be increased to compensate for their efforts in rendering justice and efface whatever perception the public has of the judiciary.

Lastly, the proposed budget of the judiciary is needed for the capital outlay projects in the lower courts throughout the country such as court equipment and the training of judges and court personnel.

This is a paid advertisement

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Makati, Manila

**NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S
FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)**

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National / Citizenship	Position
49 Dola Soledad Ave., Beller Living, Parañaque City	Atsushi Kadai Japanese	Manager
11/F Pacific Star Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat cor. Makati Avenues, Makati City	Hye Won Kim Korean	Games and Server Manager
325 Honorio Lopez Blvd., Balut, Tondo, Manila	Lihua Zheng Chinese	Purchasing Manager
ALPASTRA CORP. 325 Honorio Lopez Blvd., Balut, Tondo, Manila	Xinxin Chen Chinese	General Manager
TONINO CORP. 605 Madrid St., San Nicolas, Binondo, Manila	Zhenxiang Xu Chinese	General Manager
TONINO CORP. 605 Madrid St., San Nicolas, Binondo, Manila	Huihuang Qiu Chinese	Warehouse Supervisor
LIVELIHOOD FINANCE & TRAINING (UPLIFT) PHILS. 172 A. Mabini St., Maypayo, Caloocan City	Thomas Jean Raoul Moulac French	Technical Officer
NIGATA POWER SYSTEMS PHILIPPINES, INC. 8/F Citibank Center, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City Caloocan City	Tsuyoshi Okamura	on Maintenance of

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

RAFAEL G. AGRAVANTE
R.D., Regional Director

PDI - December 28, 2007



Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL HOME MORTGAGE FINANCE CORPORATION
5/F Filomena Building III
104 Amorsolo Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City

AN INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation ("NHMFC"), through the Bids and Awards Committee ("BAC"), invites all interested investment houses and banks to register for eligibility and to bid for the following roles: 1. Arranger; 2. Underwriter; 3. Trustee; 4. Registrar, Custodian in relation to the Securitization of the Low-Delinquency Loan Portfolio of the National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation tentatively scheduled for June 2008. Parties may bid for more than one role.

Interested parties must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) with Application for Eligibility to the Bids and Award Committee through the BAC Secretariat on or before January 04, 2008.

The eligibility requirements may be obtained for a non-refundable fee of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) per bid document at the BAC Secretariat starting January 07, 2008. The eligibility of registered bidders shall be evaluated using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria based on the eligibility requirements. Eligibility requirements/documents shall be submitted in a sealed envelope to the BAC Secretariat at the above-mentioned address. The eligibility envelope shall be opened on January 14, 2008.

The bid documents shall be available at the BAC Secretariat starting January 16, 2008 upon payment of the non-refundable fee of Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00) per bid document. The Pre-bid Conference shall be held on January 18, 2008, 2:00 P.M. at the 5/F Board Room of the National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation. Opening of bids shall be on January 23, 2008 at 12:00 noon at the Board Room, 5th Floor, Filomena Building III, 104 Amorsolo Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City

NHMFC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality/defect therein, and to accept such bid as may be deemed most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) DAISY S. DULAY
BAC Chairman

Noted by:

(Sgd.) JOSEPH PETER S. SISON
President

PDI-Dec. 28, 2007

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given of the loss of Philippine Passport # KK78489 issued to Anita P. Tolentino issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs last January 14, 2003 and valid until January 2008. The said passport was stolen last November 25, 2007.

PDI-Dec. 28, 2007

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Bureau of Internal Revenue - A18
Dep-ED Zamboanga - A18
Development Bank of the Philippines - B6
Supreme Court of the Philippines - B6
Sungao Del Sur Electric Cooperative - B6

BUSINESS

Manufacturing posts year-on-year drop in output

By Michelle V. Remo

THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR continues to perform poorly, sustaining a year-on-year drop in volume of production in October, data from the National Statistics Office showed.

Manufacturing output, measured in terms of volume, dropped 1.7 percent in October from a year ago, according to the NSO's Monthly Integrated Survey on Selected Industries (Missi).

The -1.7-percent Volume of Production Index (VoPI) in October, however, marked a slowdown from the -2.7 percent recorded the previous month.

Production volume slips 1.7% in Oct.

In terms of value, manufacturing output slightly rose in October from a year ago due to moderate increase in domestic prices. The Value of Production Index (VaPI), which measures output in terms of value and takes inflation into account, hit +0.7 percent during the month.

The NSO said sub-sectors in the manufacturing industry that recorded the highest growth in volume of production were the following: Wood and wood products (which posted a year-

on-year growth of 66.8 percent), transport equipment (23.9 percent), beverages (21.7 percent), leather products (20.4 percent), and petroleum products (19.2 percent).

But the gains were canceled out due to the losses posted by other subsectors. Those that registered the biggest drop were: tobacco (down by 36.7 percent), textiles (20.5 percent), basic metals (19.2 percent), footwear and wearing apparel (15.9 percent), and electrical machinery (15.2 percent).

The continued drop in the manufacturing sector's output was not consistent with the robust growth of the economy. Some economists said the inconsistency raised doubts on the accuracy of the reported growth of the economy, while others said it just indicated the dwindling contribution of the manufacturing sector to the growth of the overall economy.

The economy, measured in terms of gross domestic product, grew by 7.1 percent in the first three quarters of the year from the same period in 2006. In the third quarter alone, GDP growth hit 6.6 percent.

Dutch bank sees rosier '08 for RP

By Doris C. Dumlaog

DUTCH FINANCIAL GIANT ING IS UPBEAT on the Philippines for the coming year and beyond, convinced that the country—once tagged the sick man of Asia—has now shifted from a cycle of "recovery" to "growth."

In a recent presentation, ING Philippines chief investment officer Paul Joseph Garcia identified five sectors which would likely become key engines of growth for the country from 2008 to 2010—business process outsourcing (BPO), mining, tourism, property/construction and banking.

"A low-cost, English speaking workforce is one of the catalyst for the Philippines in becoming the preferred source of global BPO demand," Garcia said.

Supported by a strong telecommunications infrastructure, he said the country's BPO segment had grown to a \$3.5-billion industry and would likely expand further by 35 percent until 2010 to \$12.2 billion.

Also, Garcia said the mining sector regained its luster following the landmark Supreme Court ruling, which allowed 100 percent foreign ownership in mining firms. The decision prompted the likes of BHP Billiton, Anglo American, Indophil Resources and Lafayette Mining to set up shop in the country.

He noted that the Philippines was among the most mineralized countries in the world—ranking second in gold, third in copper, fifth in nickel and sixth in chromite. At present, only 5 percent of mineralized areas are being utilized.

"[The] government aims to accelerate Philippine mining projects and address existing environmental concerns," he said.

The mining sector's extractable resources are estimated at \$840 billion, or about 10 times of the country's gross domestic product.

Tourism is also seen as a potential engine for growth.

Philippine tourist arrival this year had risen by 8.8 percent, from the recorded 2.8 million that arrived in 2006. Arrival is expected to hit 3.15 million for 2007, and up to 3.62 million next year.

Gov't responds to debate on food vs fuel

By Abigail L. Ho

THE NATIONAL BIOFUELS BOARD, AN ENTITY created by the Biofuels Act of 2006, is expected to come up with a policy statement on the "food vs. fuel debate," which remains a huge deterrent to the development of the local biofuels sector.

Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri, the law's author, said he would ask the NBB to come out with a policy. He said he would also seek its assurance that biofuels production would not affect the country's food supply.

Jatropha, for example, is a biofuel feedstock that can help provide the country's biodiesel requirements without compromising food security as the crop is inedible.

"Jatropha is a wonder crop," Zubiri said. "It can be one of the cures to cutting down trees for charcoal. It also won't compete with food."

Even sugarcane, which is the main feedstock being eyed for local ethanol production, can circumvent the food vs. fuel debate, he said.

"Sugarcane isn't really a main food source," Zubiri said. "We can just convert our sugarcane into ethanol, turn it into a high-value crop. If it would be cheaper to import sugar, then let's just import sugar and use our sugarcane for fuel."

However, he said the search for alternative ethanol feedstock should still be continued. Feedstock, other than sugarcane and cassava, should be explored.

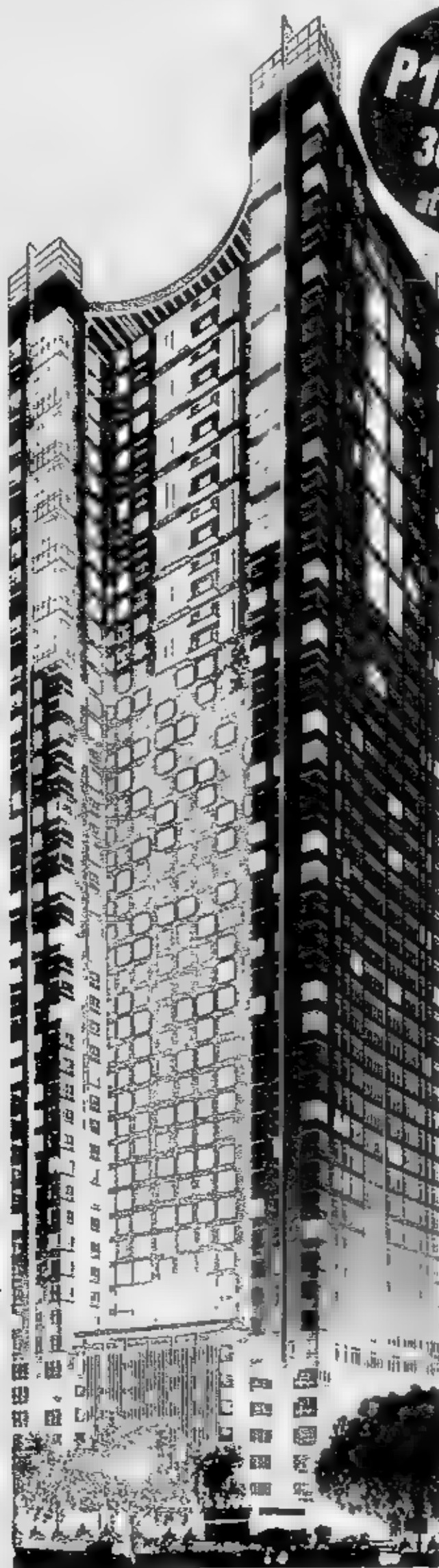
The NBB has been given an initial budget of P90 million for 2008, which will form part of the Department of Energy's P3.6-billion 2008 obligation budget.

Under the Biofuels Law, the NBB will serve as the chief overseer of the government's alternative fuels program.

The law mandates it to ensure the supply and quality of biofuels, and to recommend any increase in the volume of biofuels to be blended with gasoline and diesel.

The NBB is composed of officials from the departments of energy, finance, trade and industry, agriculture, labor and employment, and Science and Technology, as well as those from the Sugar Regulatory Administration and the Philippine Coconut Authority.

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FASHION

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Baral-Formoso



DRESS by Ronaldo Arnaldo (0917-5259823); ring by D from House of Laurel

Who's afraid of the big bad girl?

HERE'S SOMETHING TO REMEMBER before you start hitting the New Year party circuit: Good girls go to heaven, and bad girls go everywhere.

Yes, you can leave the coy maids-a-milk ensemble (and attitude) in your stocking because, as the champagne pours and the countdown starts, the badder you are, the better you look.

Mabuhay!



Jenni Epperson

I'm talking party dresses, of course!

Say goodbye to all the shapeless baby-doll dresses and trapeze and tent dresses that have flooded the stores this past season because the fashion powerhouses are already declaring them deadlier than the ghost of Christmas past.

Expect the designs to shift to more tailored, more structured pieces in metallics and sequins. It's a refreshing change—a more modern look probably inspired by Victoria Spice and Beyoncé's penchant for hourglass dresses.

It goes without saying that shapelier dresses mean bringing sexy back. Hemlines will go south but will still show some skin as they stop a few inches above the knee.

That means time to show off those legs and that waist once more! Resurrect that dusty ab workout video now—you can't continue hiding that tummy under a trapeze.

WHO'S AFRAID/C2



DRESS by Zora Suk; bag by Arman; ring by D from House of Laurel; shoes by Aldo

year-end spectacular
Offer
December 28, 2007

15% off
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Excludes shoes, handbags, jewelry, and accessories

MARKS & SPENCER

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Greenbelt 3 (757-4816) • Alabang Town Center (542-8877) • Ayala Center Cebu (562-2111) • Robinsons (921-4741)
SM Megamall A (822-7777) • SM City North Edo (419-5358) • SM City Pampanga (241-1111)
SM Mall of Asia (891-1922) • Robinsons Place Manila (522-7784) • Robinsons Galleria San Juan (884-5224)

If you want to break out of the Little Black Dress mold, make the party guests blush with an **LRD** (little red dress)

DRESS by Lyle Ibañez (0916-6114916); gloves by Carolina's; ring by Aldo; sunglasses by Ksubi from Grayone Social; shoes by Aldo



DRESS by Jon Herrera (0917-8337625); gloves by Carolina's; necklace by Aranaz; ring by D from House of Laurel; shoes by Aldo

Who's afraid of the big bad girl?

BOLERO and dress by Puey Quiñones; bangles from House of Laurel; shoes by Aldo



From page C1

I suggest that if you want to break out of the Little Black Dress mold, make the party guests blush with an LRD (little red dress).

In this fashion spread inspired by the classic fairytale "Little Red Riding Hood," with dresses from Puey Quiñones, Ronaldo Arnaldo, Zona Sul Lyle Ibañez, Jon Herrera and Charina Sarte, the uber-passionate red stands out in beautiful structured dresses.

Red, red lipstick instantly vamps up a classic LBD as well, and adds a powerful statement to an otherwise pristine white dress. Inspired pieces or accessories supercharge the party quotient—satin gloves, sky-high, patent peep-toe shoes, and, of course, skin sparklers for that added bling.

Honorable mention goes to Quiñones' festive red bolero featured here, which magically makes any outfit extraordinary.

Versatility is a crucial component this season. A little creativity with mixing and matching can get you far off into February. But more than simply a change in shapes and hemlines, the bigger change to celebrate this coming year should be you—a better perspective, a more positive outlook, greater glamour.

Now that is more than enough reason to party!

E-mail the author at jfashion@inquirer.com.ph

Photography Tom Epperson of Snapbox
Styling Rosario Herrera
Makeup Al de Leon
Hair Leo Tambourine of Toni and Guy
Model Theresa Herrera



CAPE by Puey Quiñones (0916-7763098); gloves from Carolina's; bracelets by D and ring by Aras, all from House of Laurel



DRESS by Charina Sarte (0917-8460007); brooch and ring by D from House of Laurel; bag by Aranaz

What's your style resolution for 2008?



I resolve to continue my quest to encourage individual style and not succumb to trends; to influence more people to live in color, as this will ultimately make them happier, more attractive and ultimately photogenic. I will continue to indulge my wanderlust by traveling and seeing the world as much as possible. I believe that the best education and exposure one can gain is from truly experiencing different cultures up close and personal.

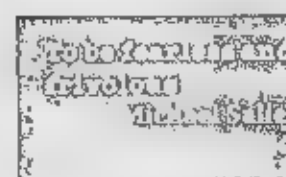
Rafe Totengco, designer

I hereby resolve to:
 -Always harness the subtle power of fashion to fulfill whatever ulterior motive I harbor at the moment.
 -Organize, organize, organize. Creative clutter does induce spontaneity, but the state of having "a place for everything and everything in its place" has been an eternal quest! I never have time to organize, and so I lose time because I'm not organized. Life is too short for this vicious cycle.
 -Present my best self to the world come hell, high water, or holy dead, one day.
 -In the spirit of S/S '08, attempt to conquer my life-long resistance to: white, pastels, and pale neutrals, which somehow just wash me out.



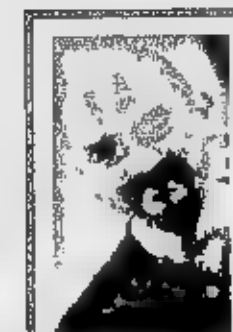
To be more conscious of my purchase decisions; to buy pieces that are environmentally friendly; to buy more Filipino-designed pieces; to wear Tepiña (piña from Palawan) on special occasions, as I believe every Filipina should have some clothes made of indigenous fabric in her closet. I also want a dress-driven wardrobe for summer 2008.

Patrice Ramos-Diaz, designer



To fight the urge to be accessory-lazy!

Mia Ayesa, model/PMAP member



Hooray for the traditionalists and conformists! In a generation of overstyling and experimentation, I think I'll opt for a well-groomed classic look, and just throw in a few touches and details to show mood and personality. For example, a classic sports coat and contrast slacks worn with an '80s ukay-ukay-find Cordero for men popsicle orange shirt.

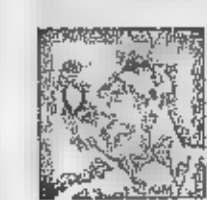
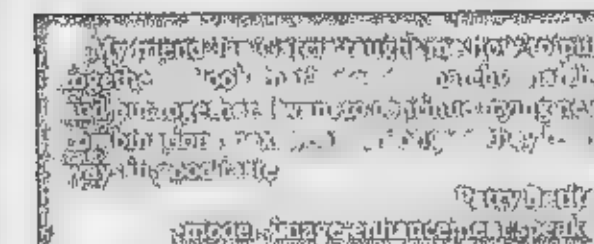
Jan Garcia, designer



Because I've filled out in the right places this year, my fashion resolution is to try out dresses in various cuts, shapes and patterns (unlike in the past when I always wore fail-safe figure-hugging frocks!). But of course, I will still be dressing appropriately in the work place.



Maureen Disini, fashion editor, Philippine Tatler



To put more colors in my wardrobe. Create fashion statements away from merely black, gray or white.



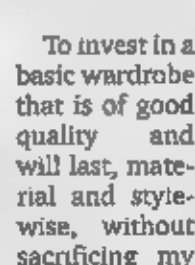
I would like to use new applications and embellishments in my clothes, giving them a newer and fresher design approach. I will experiment with new silhouettes and do a lot of variations with fabrics and textures. I also plan to introduce new details and innovations with menswear.

Randy Ortiz, designer



I'll support styling for a cause. I'll also keep supporting Pinoy brands and designers.

Millet Arzaga, INQUIRER Fashion contributing stylist



I want to transform my look, from wearing skirts to wearing dresses but still not look feminine or like a cross-dresser. That's the look I want to achieve for 2008, the masculine dress. And for work, I want to be organized, to take notes, and hopefully have a smooth life.

Pucy Quiñones, designer

To invest in a basic wardrobe that is of good quality and will last, material and style-wise, without sacrificing my comfort.

Nicolette Bell, model/international flight attendant

To keep my wardrobe simple by investing on more classic pieces.

Phemela Barranda, model/TV host

Sparkling New Year's Eve Countdown

Ramon "RJ" Jacinto at Dusit Hotel Nikko

Move and groove to the music of RJ Jacinto as he performs his signature repertoire and welcome 2008 with a bang on December 31 at the Grand Ballroom.

Ticket price of PhP5,500.00 nett per person includes buffet dinner inclusive of red and white wine, sparkling wines, beer, softdrinks and chilled juices; show and countdown plus noise makers.

For reservations and more information, please call our Restaurant Reservation Desk at 867-3333 local 3350.

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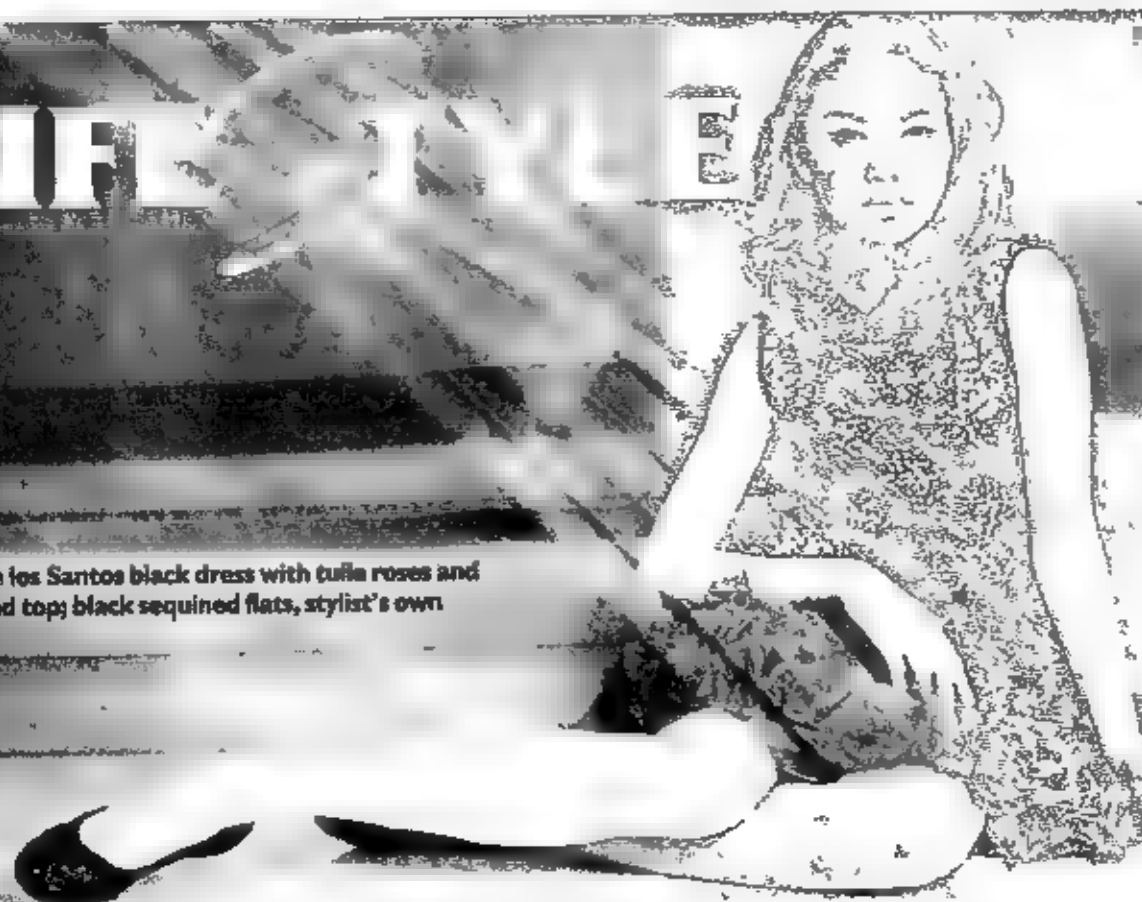
ENTERTAINMENT

TRANSACTIONS

★
FASHION

LIFESTYLE

ERIC de los Santos black dress with tulle roses and sequined top; black sequined flats, stylist's own



Sparkle and Shine

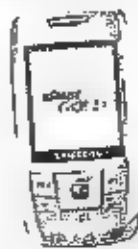
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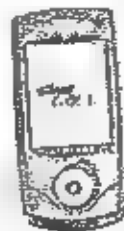
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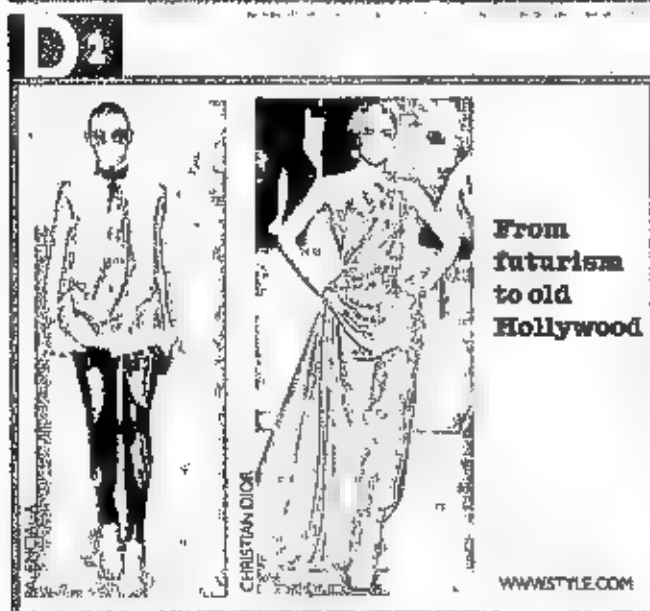
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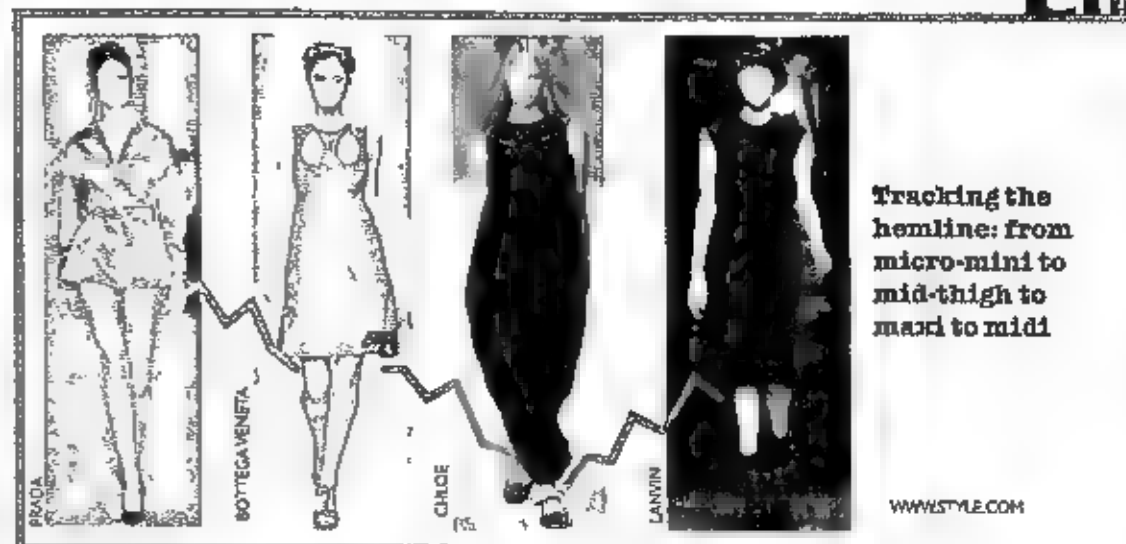
INFORMATION

ENTERTAINMENT

TRANSACTIONS



From
futurism
to old
Hollywood



Tracking the
hemline: from
micro-mini to
mid-thigh to
maxi to midi



**Never has
the local scene
seemed more
interesting and
promising**

FASHION IN 2007 was a study in contrasts.

While the year opened with cocoon silhouettes and baby-doll dresses, it closed with body-conscious pieces that looked like they were sprayed on.

While futuristic fashions ruled the runway for Spring/Summer, an obvious return to glamour and old Hollywood was apparent in the Fall/Winter showing.

Hemlines soared to high heavens in early 2007 and plateaued to an acceptable mid-thigh length come mid-summer. It moved downward to reach maxi proportions during the tailend of summer, and by year's end, it was back to a demure midi length.

Even the general trend in fashion was a juxtaposition of

luxurious decadence and downright social and environmental consciousness.

Ironically as it may seem, Anya Hindmarch's "I am not a plastic bag" shared the limelight with indulgent and ultra-expensive crocodile bags.

The local fashion scene saw the growth of the retail market, thanks to developments like the Filipino Zone in Greenbelt 5.

Although designer ready-to-wear has always been available in department stores like Rustan's or SM, the emergence of specialty boutiques that offer limited pieces by some of the country's top designers is a sure sign of a stronger demand for locally designed items.

The year also witnessed the strong presence of Cebu-based designers in the Manila fashion scene. Cary Santiago, Jun Escario and Fern One, all from Cebu, wowed the jaded fashionista crowd, together with the likes of Ivarlusi Aseron, Joey Samson and Rhett Eala, to name a few.

Modern masters Inno Sotto

APPLES' PICKINGS



Apples Aberin-Sadhvani

and Auggie Cordero also proved why they remained at the top of the heap by staging solo shows that were well-covered and well-attended by Manila's fashion elite.

Meanwhile, the Professional Models Association of the Philippines celebrated 20 years in the industry by staging a grand gala show that was participated in by 20 of the country's most sought after designers, and five generations of models.

While the likes of Ping Fideris, Tina Manstela and Leo Rabago ruled the runways when the association was first established, current designer fave Mia Ayesa is just about ready to take super-model honors.

Fail-safe marketing

Celebrity endorsers were all over the news in 2007 as well. Although Bench was way ahead of the pack when it signed on Richard Gomez some 20 years ago, others continue to latch on to the fail-safe way of marketing one's brand.

As such, top endorser KC



FASHION for a cause: Jenni Epperson's eco-ture bags; KC Concepcion and Tin Yap's artist fair; and I Can Serve Foundation's Ticked Pink Bazaar



CEBU designers hold their own against Manila's best.



**For the
incoming
year's
celebration,
ditch the
polka dots
and go for
glitz instead**

Photography Cyrus Panganiban
Styling Bianca Consunji
Makeup Tatin Yang of Lancôme Philippines
Model Camille Cruz of Elan Models

JS BOUTIQUE purple jersey gown (P8,500); Ensembles necklace (P395); Caparros purple satin pumps (P3,450)

Sparkle and shine

By Bianca Consunji
Contributor

THE NEW YEAR IS THE BEST time to anticipate fresh starts. Each year provides a clean slate where people can start things

Of course, it wouldn't do to welcome the year dressed in dull, drab clothing. Some people start January by surrounding themselves with circle-shaped food such as oranges and grapes, while others dress up in polka-dot clothes.

For the incoming year's celebration, ditch the polka dots and go for glitz instead. Attract light and energy to your look by choosing clothes that literally make you shine.

Although nothing beats jewelry for sheer "wow" factor, up the ante a bit by throwing on garments with light reflecting material (such as shiny cloth and embellishments).

To stand out and shine in a crowded New Year's party, pick jewel-toned dresses in shiny material. Silk and satin are your best bets, although you can also try to find other materials with thin metallic threads woven in-



SUE WONG Nocturne black and gold dress with beads and sequins (P19,500); Caparros gold sandals (P3,450)

to them.

Not into shiny clothes? Matte dresses are fine, but try to find embellishments that can capture light and throw it around the room (when you're in a

room full of Tivoli lights and candles, that's pretty easy)

Sequins, glass beads and rhinestones are best, but avoid looking ostentatious by choosing dresses with small, shiny pieces, as nothing screams *matrona* more than a giant chunk of bling

Finish off your look with equally sparkly accessories, like diamond earrings, strings of pearls, or thin gold or silver necklaces. Braver souls can get away with large gold cuffs or cocktail rings with semi-precious stones.

Footwear with a bit of additional sparkle such as sequins and beads can also put extra spring in your step, and can literally make you glow from head to toe.

E-mail the author at bianca-consunji@yahoo.com



NITELINE moss-green satin layered dress with beaded bustier from Rustan's Dress Salon (P24,500); Caparros gold sandals (P3,450)



ERIC de los Santos purple gown (price available upon request, tel. 0920-9264342); Caparros purple satin pumps (P3,450)



ERIC de los Santos beaded piña dress; Ensembles faux pearl necklace (P495); Caparros gold sandals (P3,450)



PINOY RTW
on the rise!
Check out
Myth and
Filipino
Zennin
Dressline



MODEL of the moment
Mia Ayesa



CELEBRITY endorses KC
Concepcion for Bayo (above) and
Anne Curtis (left) for Freeway



Concepcion was launched as the new face of Bayo while stylish Anne Curtis became Freeway's image model.

It wasn't all frivolity and fluff. Personalities and organizations came up with various projects that promoted a particular cause.

Jenni Epperson, for one, came up with tongue-in-cheek and colorful eco bags to discourage the use of plastic. A portion of the sales was earmarked for Bantay Kalikasan.

Celebrities like Ruffa Gutierrez with brothers Raymond and Richard, KC Concepcion with Tim Yap, and organizations like I Can Seive put up bazaars such as *William's for a Cause*, *Artist's Fair* and *Tickled Pink*, respectively, to benefit their advocacies.

The movement to promote all things Filipino was most apparent in 2007. Designers like Patrice Ramos-Diaz utilized indigenous materials like abaca and Piña from Palawan to make modern dresses. Randy Ortiz used Bulacan leather to develop a line of bags, belts and shoes.

The discriminating home-grown consumer is now more appreciative of locally designed and manufactured items. Or could it be that local designers are just delivering better quality pieces with cutting-edge designs that are worth one's hard-earned pesos?

This year was an exciting and productive year of contrasts in fashion. Never has the local scene seemed more interesting and promising. Next year will hopefully be even better, as Filipino design and ingenuity continue to take center stage.

E-mail the author at afashion@inquirer.com.ph

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Per DTI NCR Permit No. 3613, Series of 2007

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- Marina Square: 8 & 22 Dec till 12 midnight
- Tangs @ Orchard: 14 & 15 Dec, 21, 22 & 23 Dec till 12 midnight
- VivoCity: 1, 8, 15 & 22 Dec till 12 midnight
- Wisma Atria: 14 & 15 Dec, 21, 22 & 23 Dec till 11pm

One more blast before the New Year
Tourists can look forward to attractive Year-End Post-Christmas Day Sales at participating shopping malls along Orchard Road from Dec 24, 2007.

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LIFE-STYLED
Thelma Sioson San Juan

2007: The year of independent designers

OVER THE HOLIDAYS, FEASTING on the latest bestseller of my favorite author, John Irving, "Until I Find You," I came across a line that, to me, was the lesson of 2007.

Irving writes, "Life was not a stage, life was improv... Yes, you needed to know your lines. But on some occasions, you also had to be able to make your lines up..."

Things don't always turn out the way you expected them to. So when your day takes incredible twists, you must digress from your habitual script and learn to improvise, if only to get through the day. 2007 was such a year—unbelievable changes.

I'll remember '07 as the year they tried to steal my lines, in a manner of speaking, and tried to appropriate them for themselves. While that made me miffed, it also taught me to be pliant, to improvise with other blessings life has given me. Ironically, it even opened other worlds.

If you're honest enough, the word authentic comes to mind—you can improvise creatively. People may try to take away from you, but if you know how to improvise, they can't diminish you.

A good friend, Margie David Collins, wrote me a short and sweet greeting—"Despite gravity's pull, you must move on, upwards and forward!"

Designers

Apart from life's intrinsic lessons, we'll remember '07 as the year of independent designers—from fashion designers setting up their own stores in the malls, to bags and shoes designers launching their own lines.

Fashion designers just kept at it, undeterred by the competition from established retail brands—Lulu Tan Gan, Cesar Gaupo, Randy Ortiz, Patrice Ramos Diaz, Ivarlusi Aseron, Jolie Lloren, Rhett Eala, Inno Sotto (who will have a huge space at Rustan's for at least

three lines), Dennis Lustico, Arcy Gayatin, Frederick Peralta, among others.

Bags and accessories designers Wyn Wyn Ong, Amina Aranaz, Bea Valdez showed that high-end is the way to go, that there's a special niche for specially crafted bags and accessories.

Then there are free-standing specialty fashion stores peddling anything from vintage luxury bags to affordable limited-edition clothes and accessories. From the Rockwell store to Ingrid Chua Go's shops in Jupiter in Makati, '07 was the year of the fashion specialty stores. Their selling point? The taste and good eye as well as merchandising skills of their owners.

Chito Vijandre and Ricky Toledo of Firma paved the way for the specialty-store phenomenon. They are distinguished by their tasteful and exquisite selection of merchandise. The consumer goes by the taste of the store owner.

Gap has finally made its way to Manila. Its Glorietta store is a far cry from the made-over Gap in San Francisco, which is designed like a minimalist gallery, with giant-framed, black-and-white photos of Gap icons propped up against the glass windows or bare walls.

The Philippine store's white walls and gallery platforms, the black and white photos, the dark wood photo frames—the look is chic and classic Gap. No matter that Gap's space here is small, its classic merchandise should re-train women to mix and match, to accentuate the basic pieces with style-statement accessories.

Then there's talk that H&M isn't far behind, to be brought here by another retail giant.

In '07, Auggie Cordero emerged from reclusion to stage a gala show. Inno Sotto tapped a new source of inspiration in Alhambra, Spain.

In '07, brands such as Samsung sealed their commitment

to the development of lifestyle and design by funding it.

'07 saw the co-existence of big brands and independent designers and craftsmen, the big corporate vision with individual design endeavors.

What 2007 was for some friends:

Enrico Santos: The theme of '07 seemed to be upheaval and uprooting, witnessing the incredible and trying to make sense of the unfathomable... I adopted a child... global warming, iPhone—anyone can add to the who-should-have-thought list. The forces of life made me lose myself, and my quest for self became a brand new adventure. I can't wait for 2008. It can

2007/E4



THE INDIES of Philippine fashion include (clockwise) Rhett Eala, Frederick Peralta, Wyn Wyn Ong and Amina Aranaz.

Fashion designers have set up their own mall shops and accessories designers carved a niche in the global market

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ANIELLE Santos with Ian King



MAURICE Arcache and Ivar Aseron



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BEAUTIFUL couple Archie and Lingling King



HELENA Belmonte and Diether Ocampo



CELINE Gabriel and Matt Lim



CHESCA Litton and GP Reyes



ABBA Naga and Ipa Cruz

Some fashionable causes and the rest



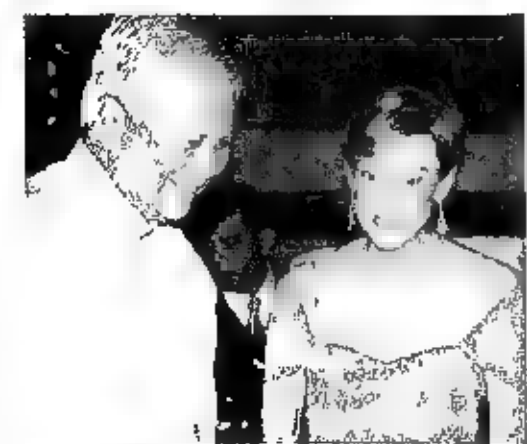
PRIME movers behind the Festival of Trees: PBSP Chairman Manny Pangilinan with Luisa Perez Rubio, former Ambassador Isabel Wilson and Joey Cuisia



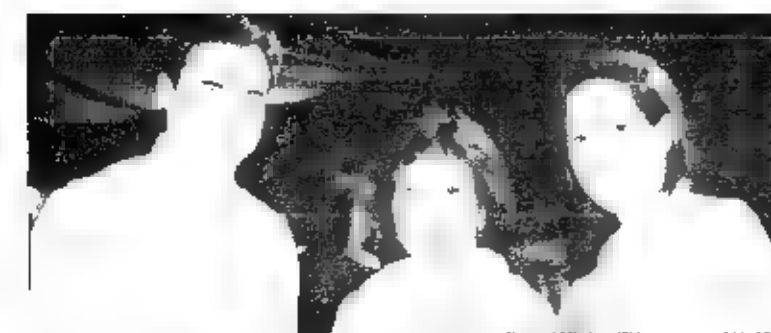
MGC ladies Linda Angeles, Marilou Laurena, Albertine Santi, Ruby Roa, Ging delos Reyes and Sonya Garcia



BABY Paterno with renowned artist Anita Magsaysay Ho and Mindy Perez Rubio



AMBASSADOR Albert del Rosario with US Ambassador Kristie Kelley



US Charge d'Affaires Paul Jones with Sonya Garcia and Catherine Jones

A FEW YEARS BACK, THE HIV Awareness Program came to fruition, *palangas*. It was an idea by smart Ian Angelo King, founder and president of Victoria Court, who had been bitten by the social-responsibility bug. Knowing how many people take a dim view of establishments like Victoria Court, he saw an opportunity to create awareness and promote safe sex among his clients.

It begun with a simple plan to give out free condoms. King then realized this alone was not going to regulate the incidence of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. So he took a step back and recognized that the root of the problem was a lack of education on the subject.

Having observed foreign awareness campaigns making use of celebrities, artists, and athletes as spokespersons, he adopted the same formula to help spread AIDS awareness in Manila.

Now, local anti-HIV advocates help Victoria Court with its ambitious campaign, which has gotten a positive response, *dahlings*.

Now, the campaign is raising funds for HIV-positive individuals. Check this out, *palangas*, Stophiv.info produces merchandise such as T-shirts, bands, and dog tags, which are for sale. Part of the proceeds help fund prevention initiatives and assist Filipino HIV carriers in getting free and constant immunization shots to prevent the development of their HIV into AIDS.

The campaign also held a superb photo exhibit featuring the newest roster of HIV awareness advocates at the new Embassy Superclub.

And don't forget, *dahlings*, every year on Dec. 1, World Aids Day, Victoria Court reminds us to "spread the love, and NOT the virus." And this year as well as the years to come is no different, *palangas*.

Christmas fund-raiser

What a magical evening! Some 300 of Cosmo Manila's premier social, business and political hotshots attended the 12th annual Christmas fundraiser, Festival of Trees, of the Philippine Business for Social Progress and Makati Garden Club.

On auction were Christmas trees of all sizes, created by *tres*

WITHOUT BATTLING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using Kodak EasyShare

doúe Maria Luisa Perez-Rubio, as well as art pieces donated by brilliant "artistes" Edgar Doctor, Joven Ignacio, Buenaventura and Trinidad.

Some 100 beautifully wrapped "mystery boxes," each with a spectacular mystery gift, were on sale, each for P5,000.

Among the guests were regal US Ambassador Kristie Kennedy, who headed the long list of namedroppables from the diplomatic corps, *palangas*.

Traffic-stopper Tessa Prieto Valdes showed up, looking wow in a *tres fantastique* Christmas tree outfit. He was with Carlo Orosa, *palangas*.

The Festival of Trees, *dahlings*, raises funds annually to help the poorest and most desolate regions in the country, such as those provinces in the Bicol region hardest hit by recent typhoons.

The caring women of substance behind the fantastic fund-raiser were led by Señora Perez-Rubio. Others were Ging delos Reyes, Belen King, Ruby Roa, Ching Caluag, Albertine Santi, Mindy Perez-Rubio, Marilou Laurena, and Baby Paterno.

Thanks to all supporters, this awesome event raised millions of pesos.

Top of the night

It was a fantastic combination of speed and style, *dahlings*, when BMW hosted the 3rd Annual 24/7 Nocturnal Awards, an event first initiated by 24/7 Magazine. The event toasted "the best of the nightlife."

If you are not in the know, *palangas*, 24/7 Magazine is a free monthly magazine available in several establishments, which serves as a guide to the finest restaurants, bars and events in Cosmo Manila.

The publication aims to feature the best nightspots, leading it to organize the Nocturnal Awards, which reflect their "readers' favorites."

Awards included Best DJ, Best Stage Event, Best Artist or Live Act, Best Restaurant, Best Music Event, Best 24/7 Cover, and Lifetime Achievement Award.

"This constant search for excellence and style became a factor for the collaboration between BMW and 24/7 Magazine, thereby leading to the production of the 3rd Annual Nocturnal Awards," explained young hotshot, BMW's corporate communication gal Leana Farrales, no less.

The happening was held in the eye-catching BMW Pavilion—an awesome 800-sq m, fully air-conditioned and luxuriously furnished tent, which was built specifically for the event.

After all was said and done, it was time to party, and party we did with BMW and 24/7, *dahlings*.

Erratum. In last Tuesday's column, Nene and Jun Leonor were incorrectly identified as Andy and Teresita Liboro. We regret the error, *palangas*.



LITO German and Mike O'Conner



FRANCIS Lumen with Maricar Lim and Nick Tuzson



ITO and Tippi Ocampo with John Lacson



CLIFFORD Chung with Regi Dela Cruz and Edwin Cruz

ERRATUM
The caption for this photo published in last Tuesday's column should have read "Jun and Nene Leonor, Louie Ablaza, Mabel Abano, and Tereret and Andy Liboro."



Fashion ideas for New Year

ROBINSONS DEPARTMENT STORE (RDS) gives you a sneak peek on 2008's hottest color choices so you can start the New Year with a big fashion bang.

Purple. Robust shades of purple will create a rich combination especially when matched with pastel lavenders or ethereal near-neutrals. So don your purple spaghetti strapped dress. For men, a purple and black striped polo and pinstriped pants is a good ensemble. A purple shirt dress with gold prints, meanwhile, shows allure and seduction.

Green. Green is the symbol of prosperity, fertility, freshness and unspoiled beauty. So take the lead in the fashion landscape by wearing a green haltered dress that reflects a cool and natural feel. Florals and foliage with an art nouveau look are hot. Green, when accented with sunny yellows, berry reds, mint, grass green or other natural shades (like a khaki long-sleeved polo over a green checkered polo shirt and denim pants) is a sure winner.

Brown and beige. From camel, leather to rust, walnut and pumpkin, shades of brown and beige will provide a chic, comfortable mood. Big this coming year are the colors of stone and earth coordinated with softer, more luxurious tones such as sky blues or sea greens. Khaki pants and brown polo will dominate the guys' scene. Muted home-y hues such as beige will also be big on girls. A cream dress with rosette design, paired with earthy browns and basic green bangles, will make a sophisticated urban look.

Rust and orange. These two hues help create a fusion of warm and cool colors, neutral shades and "brights," and various textures and sheens, including terra cotta and cinnamon. Wear your paisley print dress and top it off with pearlescent accessories.

ON HER: Cream dress with rosette design, bejeweled and brown plastic bangles



ON HER: Paisley print dress and bejeweled bangle
On him: Striped polo
On her: Orange shirt dress and long moss green necklace



ON HIM: White sweater vest, gray long-sleeve polo and gray slacks
On her: Sheer black dress over white dress and black long necklace
On her: Black and silver polka dotted dress and silver bangles



sories. A rust brown striped polo for guys or an orange shirt dress matched with a long moss green necklace for women will be a great pick for your first party of the year.

Black, gray and white. Reminiscent of the cinema of the forties yet done with a contemporary flair, being in black, white or gray inspires a certain elegance. It can also be cool, sleek and contemporary. A white sweater vest, gray long sleeved polo and gray slacks are classic examples. A sheer black dress over white dress, accented with a long bejeweled bead necklace, will suggest couture allure or a soft inviting look. Return to elegant dressing with a black and silver polka dotted dress and silver gray, ash or ivory bangles and create a dramatic interplay of light and dark.

ON HER: Purple spaghetti-strap printed dress and long necklace
On him: Purple and black striped print polo and pinstriped pants
On her: Purple shirt dress with gold design

OVERTIME ON THE DANCE FLOOR

SAN MIG LIGHT PRESENTS

DAYBREAK

THE LONGEST EVER DANCE PARTY IN MANILA



FEATURING UK'S LEGENDARY HOUSE DJ PETE HELLER



KIA

we support dance

TRINITY

skate

PARTY ALL NIGHT TO WIN COOL

2007, year . . .

From page E1

only get more surreal. (Oh my, I sound like Cory Quirino possessed by Jaime Licaucó.)

Lulu Tan Gan: Very tough year. I felt being pushed off my pedestal. Try to solve it patiently like untangling a multiple knot. The good side—I also met many kind, helpful friends.

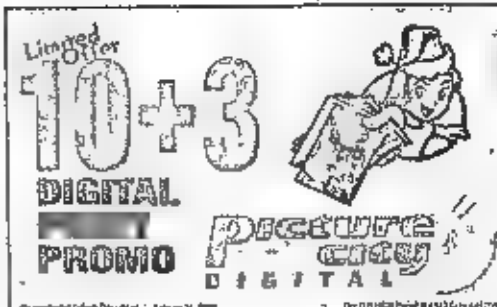
Abe Florendo: 2007, silly old fool that I am, hung up on Chinese numerology, has my personal lucky number 7 and the sum of 9, which misses by one digit the lucky number 8 in Chinese divination. That one-digit miss made the difference between the lucky and the near-lucky in my life in 2007. What the heck, near-lucky is good enough for me. God, or the universe, is famously stingy when it comes to doing (or is that dealing?) out luck or blessings. So what do I remember best of 2007? I seriously considered getting married, yikes. Good thing, I woke up one morning and while brushing my teeth I realized that marriage would be a worse tragedy than dying. Two, I almost died. Two years ago I smashed my kneecap when the

car I was riding in veered off the road and hit a huge, unpassive tree. In 2007 I broke two back ribs when I slipped on a rain-slick lane in Baguio. So I thought that was the end of porotic me. Three, I survived 2007, whole and sane and full of humor, and finished my eighth book. A miracle, considering that young soldiers, for the craziest of reasons, were dying in Iraq.

Lia Bernardo: '07 was a year of spiritual, professional and personal growth, a lot of changes and new experiences. Some were easy, most were difficult but it really led to growth. I'm so grateful that everything just seemed to fall in place, especially my personal life.

Louie Cruz: The greatest pleasure I had in '07 was Asian Dragon magazine, as my brainchild I traveled to another country and discovered a new exciting world without having left the Philippines.

Henri Calayag: It's been a good and blessed year. I have no complaint. I'm so thankful that I had spent little time with "mother" Ernest (Santiago)



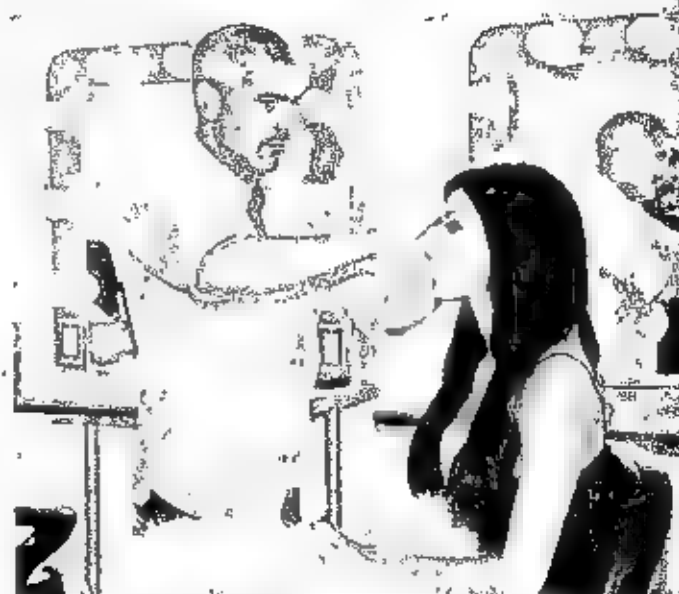
NICOLE Scherzinger at the Bench Body photo shoot at the Quixote Studio in Sta. Monica, Los Angeles

Purrfect Nicole

Like a true Bench Body icon, Pussycat Doll Nicole Scherzinger shows the world that she can fly solo

EVER FEEL THE need to express yourself freely and show the many sides of your vibrant personality? Bench Body's latest collection allows you to do exactly that.

And who better to represent Bench Body but a woman who exemplifies a "dynamic nature." Pussycat Doll Nicole Scherzinger joins Bench's list of well-known personalities who have graced its many campaigns. Known worldwide as the lead singer of the



PURRFECTION/F4

GETTING prepped and dolled up

Paolo Abrera's Balancing Act

Slow Down

In the fast-paced world we live in today, we tend to forget to slow down and enjoy the fun things in life. Stress and pressure, more often than not, make us feel tired and weary, therefore hindering wellness for our body and soul.

What we need to have is a balanced lifestyle, a philosophy espoused by the Coca-Cola Company. It is a balancing act that deals with getting the right amount of physical activity, the right kind of food to eat and enough time to experience happiness

Savor Life

The Coca-Cola Company endeavors to fulfill this by offering a wide array of softdrinks that completes a balanced lifestyle. In every bottle of our favorite softdrinks, is an experience of happiness that refreshes our body and soul.

Sportscaster and athlete, Paolo Abrera shares the same philosophy. He defines balanced lifestyle as "a lifestyle where you combine duties and priorities, to maximize your experience and get the most out of life." He achieves this by being effective at multi-tasking, or in his words "hitting many birds with a few stones"

He is able to balance priorities namely work, family and his active lifestyle through simple routines: riding his bike to work, holding cycling classes as a part-time job and spending "quality swim-time" with his children.

Happier State of Mind

The Coca-Cola Company encourages everyone to get the most out of life by maintaining a balanced lifestyle. Have a balanced diet everyday, engage in a lot of physical activity and get enough rest.

Develop a clearer perspective on how to manage life's priorities and needs and have a happier state of mind. Do what you need to do and cherish every refreshing bottle of your favorite softdrink.



www.bawatpatak.mahalaga.com.ph



GET EVERYTHING YOU WANT OUT OF YOUR LIFE.

My happiness comes from living a balanced life.

As a sportscaster and athlete,
I balance everything everyday!
I maintain a balanced diet,
get a lot of physical activity, enough rest,
and drink what makes me happy! ☺☺

Paolo Abrera
Sportscaster and Athlete

A balanced life is a Sparkling Life.



www.bawatpatak.mahalaga.com.ph

"Bawat Patak, Mahalaga" first logo: "The Droplet Design" "Coca-Cola" "Coke" the Design

Bk

Sars

Sparkling are trademarks

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EFREN OCAMPO gives new elegance to the iconic little black dress with draping and ostrich feathers. Fashioned mostly from chiffon materials, the dress gently cascades down the body, giving it a "simple yet elegant look." This is one LBD that will stand out in any holiday party.



CESAR GAUPO stays close to his minimalist roots with simple, undercluttered and clean looks. His collection of jersey dresses is filled with surprises that emerge from cocoon silhouettes and dramatic draping. "I want my clothes to be very feminine," said Gaupo. "But I also like them to be playful and very wearable."

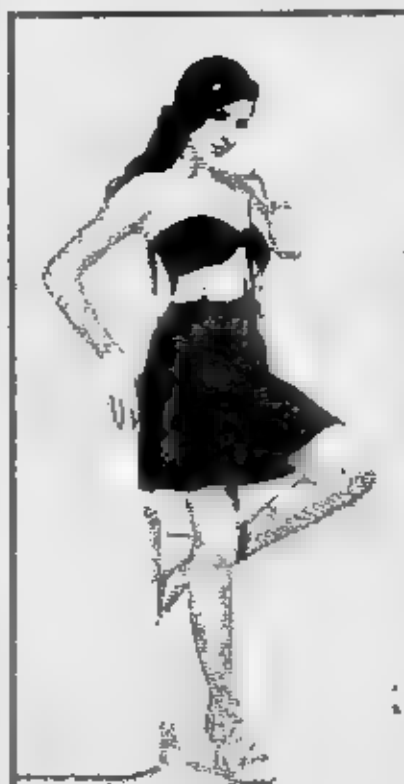


Elegant and glamorous staples



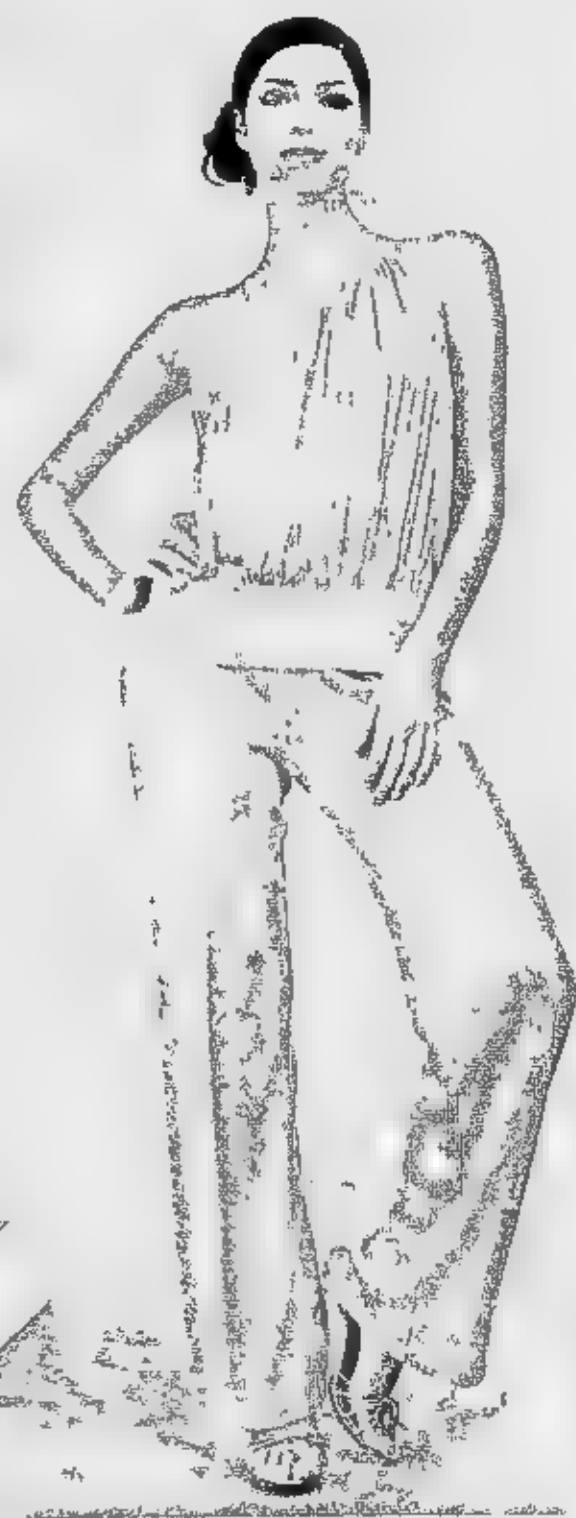
MIKE DE LA ROSA takes the vintage route with rich velvet and rustling taffeta outfits as well as A-line and trapeze dresses that capture the charm of the '60s. These make for dramatic entrances anywhere, anytime.

Cesar Gaupo, Efren Ocampo, Lulu Tan Gan and Mike de la Rosa have long defined glamour and elegance at SM. Going beyond the holidays and onto the New Year, they continue to cast their fashion spell with timeless and tastefully crafted clothes for the modern woman



enter the gilded age with touches of gold and bronze in glitzy separates. But the knit queen remains simple and practical. "Elegance should not be loud," she said, adding that "halter tops, tunics, shrugs, wraps, and pants are easy to mix and match."

AND MIKE DE LA ROSA ARE AVAILABLE AT THE LADIES WEAR BOUTIQUE DEPARTMENT OF SELECTED SM STORES.



GOINGS ON

Two reunions

The Andres Metilla-Modesta Suralta clan will have a grand reunion on Dec. 31 at the ancestral home of the Metilla clan on Lily Street, Bansalan, Davao del Sur. The clan that includes members from Germany, Switzerland and Australia will have a tree-planting activity on Andres Metilla Road, named after Bansalan's first barrio lieutenant who established the first primary school, Catholic church and wet market. Ikebana professor Serapion S. Metilla (tel. 0917-8321352) will conduct a seminar on plant arts. Meanwhile, the Association of Bansalenos Worldwide headed by Netherlands-based Lella Noe

Rispens held a reunion to help promote Bansalan as a tourist destination. With the support of Mayor Edwin Rayas, it aims to help indigent children through a literacy program.

PROMO. Renaissance Makati City Hotel, Manila bids farewell to its Coffee Shop with "Prices of '94," a three-day promo, Dec. 28-30. The promo includes breakfast, lunch and dinner buffets, a la carte menu selections, and beverages. The Coffee Shop will close its doors and will transform into an all-day dining restaurant. The grand opening for the restaurant and the new lobby lounge is slated for the second quarter of 2008. Call 8116888.



FIFA PRESIDENT IN MANILA

Joseph Blatter (center), president of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (Fifa), was recently welcomed in Manila by Sofitel Philippine Plaza general manager Bernd Schneider (left) and Philippine Football Federation (PFF) president Jose Mari Martinez. Blatter was in the Philippines as part of the centennial celebration of the federation. Sofitel Philippine Plaza was the official residence of the Fifa delegation. Blatter also visited Tuluyan sa Don Bosco Children's Village, where PFF organized a special youth tournament for street children.

BEAUTY

MISTINE Lip
Spa lip balm

**Bodycare
products are
practical and
inexpensive
gifts**

GLUTA RED
products

Clutter-free New Year's gifts

CHRISTMAS JUST SEEMS to have whizzed by, but many of us still have friends and relatives whom we will be seeing before New Year but whom we have not given presents to.

Hardly anybody has bottomless pockets so my advice to you is to give something practical and consumable as most people now live in condominiums or compact spaces with the now "in" Zen look that does not leave room for clutter.

My shopping places of choice? Drugstores and grocery aisles or places which sell bath and body products.

Treating body breakouts

Because the weather abruptly changes from warm to cold, and because of warm sweaters and unhealthy diets, we tend to have breakouts on the back and shoulders. The specific reason is dry dead skin on the surface blocking the pore opening. Options:

Body scrub—If applied with dry hands on dry skin and scrubbed on for a minimum of 10 seconds per area, it will check the pore blockers and wash these down the drain.

Follow with a shower gel to get that smooth, silky texture afterward. Those who prefer soap should rinse off all the grains, then scrub up with soap afterward so the bits don't get stuck on your soap bar.

Meanwhile, the acne-prone should apply lotion or body butter on arms, thighs and legs but avoid the shoulders and back. Go by scent variant or one that addresses your concern like whitening, firming or anti-aging.

Anti-dandruff hair conditioner—In the war of anti-dandruff products, both Head & Shoulders and Clear are very good. Those who have oily, acne-prone skin should switch to either of these as they have zinc and other active ingredients that actually treat and prevent acne. Just pick the scent and variant you want. I go for the one with menthol as I like the cold feel.

Cellulite—The battle is never-ending and most women would really appreciate a lifetime supply of anti-cellulite products, because we all know that once we stop using them, the unwanted "dimples" start creeping back. Among the drugstore brands, I have to say Nivea Goodbye Cellulite (P499) delivers. Team with Glutawhite and firm lotion (P289), and we have got a winning combination as both contain L-Carnitine that burns stored/trapped fat.

Hand wash—Always having guests in the house, I realized a bar of soap on the sink would start to look gross after some time.

MAKEOVER
911
Kinny Salas



Watson's has super prices and a new, very concentrated hand-wash soap that smells great. Prices range from P80 to P200. The ones in my house: Watson's Wish in Citrus Melon, a very refreshing scent; and Sugar Babe, which smells comforting and creamy!

Also try Island Life whitening wash liquid soap in rice bran oil.

Lip balm—Kiehl's Lip balm with or without tint and Smith's Rosebud Salve are still the top favorites for seriously chapped and flaking lips. These penetrate the flaky dry top layer and really hydrate, plump and soothe like a drink of water on and land. Continued use improves lips' condition even on days you forget to use the product. Kiehl's is available at Greenbelt 5 while Smith's Rosebud Salve is at any Lora branch.

Oral whitening—Closet whitening fanatics who visit my house always hint they want these for Christmas. They ask me if I can serve them "the whitening water aka Gluta Snow" or have extra tablets I can spare them. The cheapest ones I found and tried with the right dosage of Glutathione, Alpha lipoic acid and Vitamin C are Snow caps at Watson's and Glowthione by Godiva available at any Godiva skin station branch. Both cost P1,500 for 30 capsules.

Let me know if you know of others that work and are reasonably priced.

Nothing is faster than the actual Glutathione injections straight to the vein which I get whenever I can from Belo clinic, Godiva Skin station and, occasionally, Blooming clinic at Timog. Results show after three sessions of double-dose twice a week.

But they are expensive and do hurt no matter what people say. It just depends on your tolerance for pain and how vain you are. Belo's is fastest (results after three-dose sessions at P5,000 per single-dose session). But it is also the most painful due to the added active secret ingredient which goes on thick.

Godiva, though, may still be having its promo at P5,000 for three sessions so feel free to check it out. Single-dose sessions range from P3,500 to P10,000, depending on the establishment.

E-mail the author at kinnyalas@yahoo.com

WATSON'S
hand wash
Wish in Wild
Strawberry
and Play
Sugar Babe

GODIVA
Glowthione



New Year, new loot

WHILE I love Christmas, I think we should all have a break after the festivities. Hopping from one Christmas party to another can be fun but very taxing.

At first I was contemplating about writing a "New Year, new you" story for this space, but the longer I thought about it, the less appealing it became.

I know we all need some sort of improvement, and, no, I don't mean anything major like a nose job, though if that's what you want for the New Year I have no objections. If that's what you think will make you happy, go for it! Just make sure you've done your research and your doctor is reputable.

Wait, I'm getting sidetracked...

There are certain things that I think should be done before the year ends. Like checking which products on your dresser should be thrown out. Yes, even products need

KNOCKOUT!



Ria Francisco-Prieto

a break, and believe me, your skin needs a break from them, too. So be ready to kiss your fave lipplie goodbye. You can always buy the same shade.

Not all beauty products have expiration dates written on their packaging, but if they begin to smell and feel pasty, or have begun to discolor, ditch them pronto.

The shelf life of any cosmetic used around the eye area is more limited, because repeated microbial exposure during its use runs the risk of eye infection. Adding water or, worse, saliva to moisten it will only invite bacteria.

For that matter, all-



**Before the year ends,
check which products
on your dresser should
be thrown out**

natural products have the shortest shelf life, so take note of your beauty loot.

Check to see if boxes have expiration dates printed on them. Store products in room temperature and make sure not to expose them to direct sunlight. And for hygienic purposes, avoid sharing products.

SOME MORE TIPS.
MASCARA. Can it after 3-6 months. The pumping motion pushes air in that can also bring in bacteria and possible eye infections.

EYELINER. Can it after 6 months. Bacteria can grow around the tip even if you sharpen it weekly. When the pencil starts to crumble as you

sharpen it, bacteria is present for sure.

FOUNDATION. Can it after 6 months, though water-based formulas last longer than oil-based ones. Make sure the sponge is clean and changed as often as possible.

EYE SHADOW. Can it after 9-12 months. Eye shadow is not supposed to cake, so if this happens, you know it is time to throw it away.

BLUSH. Can it after 1-2 years. No use saving those crumbs since they won't blend evenly anyway. Throw away when it starts to crack.

LIP COLOR. Can it after 2 years. Smell it. If it smells weird, it belongs in the trash can.

SPORTS HERITAGE INSPIRES LACOSTE WATCH COLLECTION

The relaxed elegance for which LACOSTE has become known finds fresh expression in a new collection of watches inspired by the sports heritage of the brand—especially its authentic tennis, golf and yachting roots. "My idea was to design more original, singular creations, not so traditional but more design-oriented and yet perpetuating a true watch-making value," says Christophe Pilet, French interior and product designer who also serves as creative consultant for LACOSTE watches.

ADVANTAGE represents the sporting attitude toward life of the LACOSTE brand. It is a superbly designed timepiece featuring a unique mix of classic and contemporary as well as hard and soft materials. The watch has a black rubber bezel, a polished stainless steel case and a perforated rubber strap with debossed LACOSTE logo. Water resistant to 5 atm/50 meters/165 feet.

MATCH POINT is an iconic men's sports watch that can make the cut from the club room to the boardroom. Its case is stainless steel with four screw attachments at the lugs. The bezel features an etched LACOSTE logo under a curved mineral crystal, while the black dial has a sweep subdial with applied luminescent markers. The black hands are also luminescent coated with a red sub sweep second hand. The watch has a two-hand sub sweep second movement and a PVD coated crown with steel crocodile logo and black enamel fill. It is water resistant to 5 atm/50 meters/165 feet. The sporty black perforated rubber strap is on a deployment buckle with safety catch.

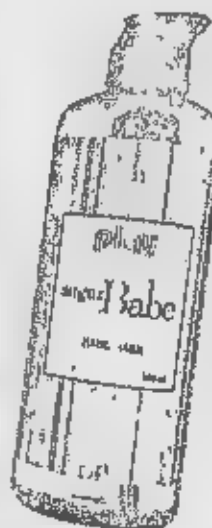


ADVANTAGE
2010392
Php 14,650

MATCH POINT
Green
2010328
Php 21,950

MATCH POINT
black
2010324
Php 16,950

AVAILABLE AT L TIMESTUDIO, CHRONOS, LUCERNE
AND SELECTED LACOSTE SPECIALTY BOUTIQUES.



Purrfect Nicole



From page F1

All female band famed for such hits as "Don't Cha," "Buttons" and "Stuckwitu," she's also about to launch her own album. Like a true Bench Body icon, Nicole is set to show the world that she can also fly solo.

Gifted with a gorgeous face and a beautiful voice, Nicole also stands out because of her outstanding dance moves.

Her beauty is in full display in Bench Body's latest campaign. Shot at the Quixote Studio south of Sta. Monica, Los Angeles, the photos show another side of Nicole. Clad in a stylish and good-fitting V-neck strap tee and low-rise bikini, she looks simple, soft, and sweet but feisty and confident.

Nicole, who is of Filipino descent (with a Filipino father and a Hawaiian-Russian mother), is a true professional and a delight to work with. During the shoot, she was prompt, open and very pleasant, not at all demanding. She moves with such ease, making it so easy for the Bench team to direct her.

Bench Body outlets are located in Glorietta, SM Megamall, SM Manila, Alabang Town Center, Robinsons Ermita, SM Sucat, SM Fairview, SM Pampanga, SM Lucena, SM Dasmariñas Cavite, SM Centerpoint, Robinsons Galleria, SM Baguio and SM North Edsa.

NICOLE Scherzinger dons a stylish and well-fit blue V-neck strap tee and low-rise bikini, both by Bench Body.



PINK Salon by Barbie offers salon services such as diva and princess hairstyles, glitter tattoo, temporary hair color, nail art, glamour curls, Barbie haircut and Barbie foot spa.

Salon for real dolls

PINK SALON BY BARBIE RECENTLY opened at Funranch Mall in Frontera Verde, Pasig City. Pink Salon is the first licensed Barbie salon in the Philippines and in the world. It is located inside Toy Barn, a toy-store company at the Fun Ranch Mall in Frontera Verde in Pasig City.

The Toy Barn is owned and operated by Toy Barn Inc., the Filipino company granted with the first Barbie salon franchise in the world. Toy Barn Inc. owns and operates Pink Salon by Barbie.

Pink Salon by Barbie offers the complete services of a salon—pampering young misses as young as 3 years old and above. It can also be a great bonding place for moms and young girls as some services can be done to their mommies as well. Services include diva hairstyle, glitter tattoo, temporary hair color, nail art, glamour curls, Barbie haircut for moms and kids, and Barbie foot spa—all at affordable prices.

"We strictly follow the guidelines given to us by Mattel so our clients can be assured that what we have are premium services," said Mozzy Ravena.

The salon can accommodate a maximum of 16 girls at a time so it's also an ideal place to spend quality time with girl friends. The salon offers party packages such as Barbie's Fab Day Out, Barbie's Beauty Cuties, Barbie's Pamper Me, Barbie's Holiday Fun, and Barbie's Everything Girl.

The salon uses Barbie products for the services that are also available for sale. The latest Barbie dolls and other products are also for sale.

The salon is at the upper ground level of Funranch Mall in Frontera Verde, Pasig City. Toy Barn and Pink Salon by Barbie are open every day including holidays from 12 noon-9 p.m. (weekdays) and 10 a.m.-10 p.m. (weekends and holidays). For party reservations, call 6361320.

Make This Christmas Extra Special for Lolo and Lola

Grandparents are extra generous towards their children and grandchildren especially during the holidays. However they are often taken for granted in considering as receivers of Christmas presents as families cannot figure out what to give. Mind you, old age is a golden period of their lives when they would love to be surrounded with their family and enjoy their attention. This Christmas, buy something really meaningful and useful for your grandfather and grandmother such as instruments for keeping a watch on their blood pressure and blood sugar level. Avoid book readers always love to own a new good book or novel or have an annual subscription of some really good magazine may also be made as Christmas gifts. Or if baking interests you, cakes, pastries or cookies especially made to suit their sugar limitations may be a good present. A new set of clothes that can be used when walking in the malls or parks may also brighten up lolo and lola's Christmas. It really all depends on how much you know your grandparents and their interests. But if you want something that would be most useful, our grandparents may also need a good companion such as dependable adult diapers like Dr. P, because it is important that this holiday, bonding time with the family is uninterrupted.

Dr. P not only guarantees quality time experience, but promises maximum secured feeling. This is because Dr. P has variants designed to fit



every need. Every diaper comes with super absorbent pad, high speed channels and anti-bacteria action giving maximum protection for a worry free time with the family. For light incontinence, there's Dr. P Basic that has adjustable tapes for easy refastening to follow contour of the waist. For heavy incontinence, there's Dr. P Day-Use that has an additional leak guard feature to prevent side spills. For extra heavy incontinence and overnight use, there's Dr. P Maxi Overnight that has a soft waist band for back leak protection. All these in very affordable prices from the no. 1 adult diaper! Dr. P is available in leading supermarkets and drugstores nationwide.

New Charmee Go Girl Pantyliners!

Comfort and protection is of utmost importance to young and active ladies especially when they are engaged to a lot of activities daily like school, organizations, sports and gymmicks.

It is essential that they are given the right feminine protection like what Charmee provides. Introducing Charmee Go Girl Pantyliner! This new variant from the Charmee Pantyliner family will surely be



a hit to young active girls. Its unscented pad has comfortable cottony soft cover for gentle protection and all-day fresh feeling. Its strong adhesives keep the pantyliner in place to ensure hassle-free movements no matter how strenuous their activities are. Plus its very budget friendly! Now activities may be enjoyed well without the worries of discomfort with Charmee Go Girl pantyliners!

All-Night Protection with Charmee All-Night Plus!

Getting the right amount of sleep is vital, but equally important is the quality of sleep. Heart problems, weight issues and stress have all been associated with inadequate and/or irregular sleeping habits. Many women get too little sleep as a result of busy, stressful lives. Fortunately, there are a number of approaches women can use to improve their sleep, including regular exercise, establishing regular bed and wake times, improving the sleep environment, and getting the right feminine pads at the time of menstrual cycle. Just like what the new Charmee All-Night Plus can offer. The overnight feminine pad recently launched by Charmee has essential features for comfort and protection to make quality sleep easier to achieve. It has Soft Cotton Cover for gentle protection and Breathable Backsheet for comfort. This new

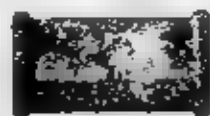
overnight pad will keep you protected with its Wetness Protection System that makes the pad absorb from the center looking in the wetness giving a dry feeling and also has an All-Around Flow guard to prevent side leaks. Plus, its extra long pad that measures 325 mm in length, even longer than other overnight pads and Key-hole shape provide more support to prevent back leaks. With all these features, Charmee All-Night Plus assures superior all-night protection for the kind of quality sleep every woman needs at a very pocket friendly price!



Double Your Luck!

"MARITES ALLEN'S FENG SHUI WAYS TO WIN -PART 2"

Learn valuable feng shui tips and win prizes from our FENG SHUI TRIVIA



And In Cooperation with



FIRST WEEKLY WINNERS December 2-8, 2007

Winners of one (1) Ticket each for the "Marites Allen Philippines 2008 Feng Shui Updates"

EDUARDO S.J. ONG
ROSELLE QUEBRAL

One (1) Winner of one (1) Motorola 220 Mobile Phone from Smart & Wolfpac Mobile, Inc.

ESPIE VINARAO

One (1) Winner of one (1) GUESS Watch from



LILIAN LOZADA

Winners of one (1) WOF5 GIFT PACKS each

DYESABEL TERUEL
RENE J. NOVISTEROS
TITA B. SANTOS
MA. LUISA ILUSTRE
IRMA C. DOMINGO
PIERRE UY

Now It's back!

World Of Feng Shui proudly presents

Marites Allen
PHILIPPINES
2008 FENG SHUI
UPDATES
Year of The Earth Rat

Saturday, 19th Jan 2008 (12:00 PM - 4:00 PM)

Also watch out for The "Marites Allen Philippines 2008 Feng Shui Updates" the biggest feng shui festival in the country Hosted by Ms. Marites Allen January 19, 2008 Renaissance Makati City Hotel Manila (formerly New World Renaissance Hotel)

MARYLOU C. GRAVADOR
MARY ELEONOR MILLAMINA
MANUEL PASIA
MALOU AMANTE
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The organizer reserves the right to amend programmes as deemed necessary without prior notice.

Per DTI NCE Series No. 4395 of 2007. Promo period: Dec. 2, 2007 to Jan. 7, 2008.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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MMFF's first-day high

THE TOP THREE EARNERS ON THE FIRST DAY (DEC. 25) OF the Metro Manila Film Festival: "Enteng Kabisote 4," P19.5 million; "Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo," P17M; "Shake, Rattle and Roll 9," P12.5M. The "audited figures" were provided by Ric Camaligan, MMFF executive committee member, who added that opening day posted a total of P60 million in box-office receipts. See related story on Page G5. Bayani San Diego Jr.



MARIAN
Rivera,
star of
"Desperadas"
float
PHOTOS BY
RUDY ESPERAS

VIC SOTTO in red T-shirt, "Enteng Kabisote 4"



VIC SOTTO in red T-shirt, "Enteng Kabisote 4"



BONG
REVILLA as
warrior,
"Resiko"

Meeting 'the Pope' and Enteng at the festival parade /G5

Our most fascinating interviews of 2007 Only In Hollywood /G2

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ENTERTAINMENT

Most fascinating interviews of 2007

LOS ANGELES—ANGELINA Jolie and Francis Ford Coppola are among those who made it to our annual list of most fascinating interviews.

These are the interviewees who did not bore us to tears; they are the folks we could talk to for hours and hours, without once looking at our watch or staring at the ceiling or the floor.

Francis Ford Coppola

"The Filipino people were generous and worked so hard with us. We will forever be affectionate toward them." Those were the sentiments expressed by director Francis Ford Coppola when we asked him about making "Apocalypse Now" in the Philippines. "Salamat po!" he said to us twice.

It has been 32 years since one of cinema's greatest directors began filming his Vietnam War masterpiece in Laguna and other parts of the country. Hailed as a genius for his innovations in the landmark film—including the use of Wagner's "The Ride of the Valkyries" in a scene involving attacking helicopters—Coppola won the Cannes' coveted Palme d'Or in 1979.

But the making of "Apocalypse" also took its personal and financial toll on the director. His wife, Eleanor, chronicled the debacles, including incidents that threatened their marriage, in the documentary, "Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse."

The director mortgaged his winery estate to finance the movie. While the film made some money, it took a while before Coppola regained his financial bearings.

In our interview, he volunteered how his daughter, Sofia, a child back then but now also a respected filmmaker, tried to stop folks from delivering foreclosure papers at the porch of their Napa Valley home in California, which she likened to Tara, Scarlet O'Hara's beloved estate in "Gone With the Wind."

Francis revealed, "...I couldn't even find

ONLY IN
HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales



actors... to go to the Philippines to do the film. Ultimately, I had to finance the picture by putting up [on the block] the wine estate that would later make my fortune."

The list of actors who eventually went with Francis to the Philippines was impressive, even by today's standards: Marlon Brando, Martin Sheen, Robert Duvall, Dennis Hopper and some virtual unknowns then, like Harrison Ford and Laurence Fishburne (who was only 14 at the time—he lied about his age).

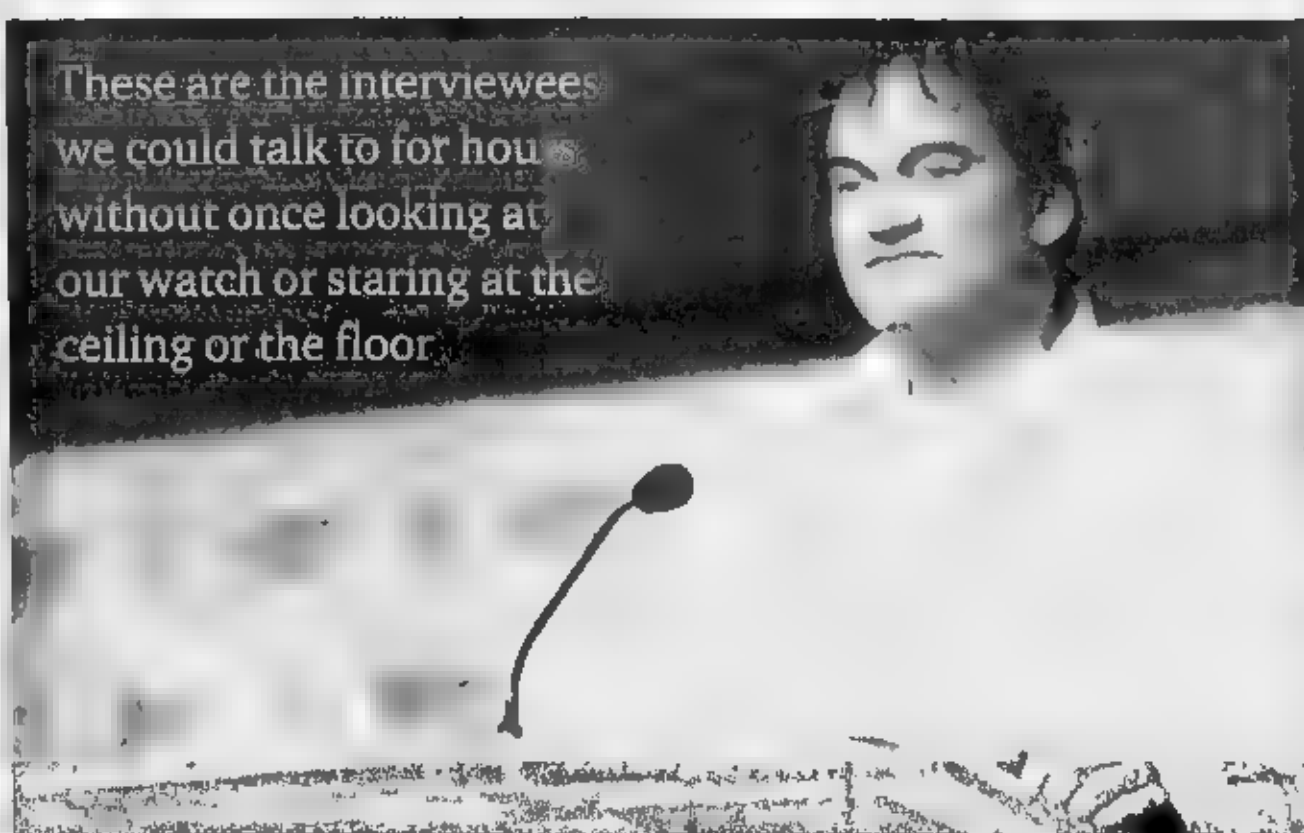
It was no surprise therefore that when the Oscar- and Golden Globe-winning director was asked which film personally affected him the most, he quickly replied, "Definitely, 'Apocalypse Now.' That was the most dramatic personal experience I ever had because I not only had all my money at risk, I was also making a film that was, artistically speaking, precarious. I was in new territory."

Javier Bardem

It was entrancing to hear Javier Bardem speak in our press con with him in Toronto. While Javier was blurring out words in English, a language he is learning to master, he was speaking from his Spanish heart and mind. His answers were passionate, sometimes surprising, and definitely not generic.

One of the few actors to win the Best Actor Award twice at the Venice Film Festival, Javier was quoted as saying about his English fluency in a different interview: "I'm getting more comfortable, but it will never get to the point as if you are doing it in your own language. When I say 'I love you' or 'I hate you' in Spanish, many things come to my mind, aspects of my own life. When I say it in English, I don't have the memories."

Of his violent character in the Coen brothers' acclaimed "No Country for Old Men," the Spaniard actor said, "For my own sake, thank God, the Coens created a nice, calm, peaceful and funny atmosphere. If the set was filled with tension, then I would have had a hard time because I don't particularly like killing people (laughter). One of the things that shocked me was how American culture involves so much familiarity with guns. On the set, almost everyone knew about the caliber of the guns, how



QUENTIN Tarantino, the newest, proudest exponent of the barong, also champions Filipino films made in the '60s and '70s.

they work, their names. I was like, 'What the hell (laughter)?' Where I come from, we are not obsessed with guns."

Javier's character is merciless. He is the exact opposite: "I'm very good at forgiving. Not forgetting but forgiving. You can't forget because to forget is like putting a wall to the memory that is going to teach you how to overcome that situation. Forgiving is important. Like when I forgive you, I forgive the human race, my own human mistakes."

Angelina Jolie

Here's Hollywood's lovehug in face and spirit on aging: "Age is beautiful. My mother was beautiful. She was 58 when she passed away. I have a family who loves me as I am."

On whether she would like to be Angelina Jolie with Brad Pitt again, or a powerful, sexy woman when she is reborn, the actress said with a laugh, "Can't I be both? Honestly, I'd like to be a pilot and a painter."

The mother, movie star and political activist explained how she manages to wear different hats: "It involves proper scheduling. Obviously, my priorities are my children. They are growing up. I'll be doing even less work, because that's what I prefer to do. As for political activism, I've been educating myself on things that are happening around the world. It's a privilege to be able to do it. I feel motivated to say or do something because I'm in a position to do so."

But when asked to rank her priorities, Angelina answered, "I'm a mom first. I don't know if I'm as much an ambassador as I'm a citizen of the world. I just want to learn about the world and its cultures. Lastly, I'm an actress."

Quentin Tarantino

The newest, proudest exponent of the barong is an ardent, knowledgeable fan of Cirio H. Santiago, Eddie Romero and Gerry de Leon as well. Quentin's "Death Proof" features a scene where Rosario Dawson's make-up artist and stand-in character talks about an incident while filming in the Philippines—how she was at an outdoor rave while she was in the Philippines doing a movie called "Three Kicks to the Head, Part 3."

The writer-director told us his inspiration for that scene: "In my mind, they were doing a Cirio H. Santiago film in the Philippines, one of those straight-to-video action movies. Probably Don 'The Dragon' Wilson was the star of it. The story that Rosario's character was telling actually happened with Zoe and me in China when we were shooting 'Kill Bill.' We were at a rave at the Great Wall and the exact story happened. Zoe was trying to take a picture of me and she kept saying, 'Go back, go back, go back.' All of a sudden, I realized that I was on the edge of a precipice. I would have fallen into a gaping abyss had I taken one step back. If I listened to what Zoe said, I might not be here right now (laughter). She herself turned around and fell in the ditch. She fell on her feet and she was like, 'No worries.'"

Joaquin Phoenix

"I wonder which Joaquin Phoenix we're going to get?" A colleague mused over which side of the brilliant but moody actor would be on display during our interview. We've seen the quiet, almost aloof Joaquin, but we've also had the animated, fun and joking Joaquin.

Fortunately, the latter showed up at our press con in New York. Joaquin laughed and answered with wit and candor when he was asked about being called "Wacko Phoenix" by Robert Duvall, who plays his estranged father in the crime thriller, "We Own the Night."

The Golden Globe Award winner for his portrayal of Johnny Cash in "Walk the Line" was a bundle of restless energy. He lit up a Camel cigarette, swung his arms, folded the table cloth and drew circles on it with his fingers, and scratched the back of his ear and his arm.

"I feel stupid talking about this stuff," he blurted at one point, when he was asked

about his "acting process." The actor, noted for his intense dark eyes, was reluctant to talk about acting, but when he did, his answers and insights were refreshing and non-generic. We think, though, that he beat Russell Crowe and Colin Farrell in the number of times he said the "F" word.

Joaquin was the first to downplay the he-was-Johnny-Cash reports: "I remember working on 'Walk the Line' and having a dream about Johnny Cash. Big f---ing deal! You have been reading about Cash for two months and listening to his music. How do you not expect it to enter your subconscious while you sleep? I realize that it's not because I've become Johnny and now I'm feeling what he's feeling."

"I'm not sure who's responsible for the stories of me so obsessed with being Cash during the shoot," he continued. "It seems like it's a combination of the studios, the actors and journalists. They sort of conspire to give it some extra meaning... Whenever I'm asked about my acting process, I say it's more like an act of desperation. It's like asking somebody who has survived a 60-foot fall: 'What was his process for survival?' I don't know. I was upside down at one point (laughter)."

On being called "Wacko Phoenix" by Robert Duvall, he quipped, "It takes one to know one." He added, "This is the guy who talks to me about steak, lobster and tango before we do a serious scene. Then, he just hits it! There's nothing of that serious actor-getting-into-it bulls---! I have great admiration for Duvall. I don't think there's an actor who has seen his work who wasn't affected by his performance."

Joaquin disclosed his "process" to play a son at odds with Robert's cop character: "I wanted a reaction from Duvall from the very beginning. The reason I put an earring on my ear was that I was hoping he would look at me and think what a pathetic pussy I was (laughter). The moment Duvall saw that I had an earring, he walked right up and said, 'What the hell is this?' He started flapping my ear, going, 'What's this?' It was effective."

"He did actually swing at me once," the actor bared. "It was something I felt I needed. In no way was it meant to affect his performance. I'm not arrogant enough to think that I could do that!" (To be continued tomorrow, Saturday.)

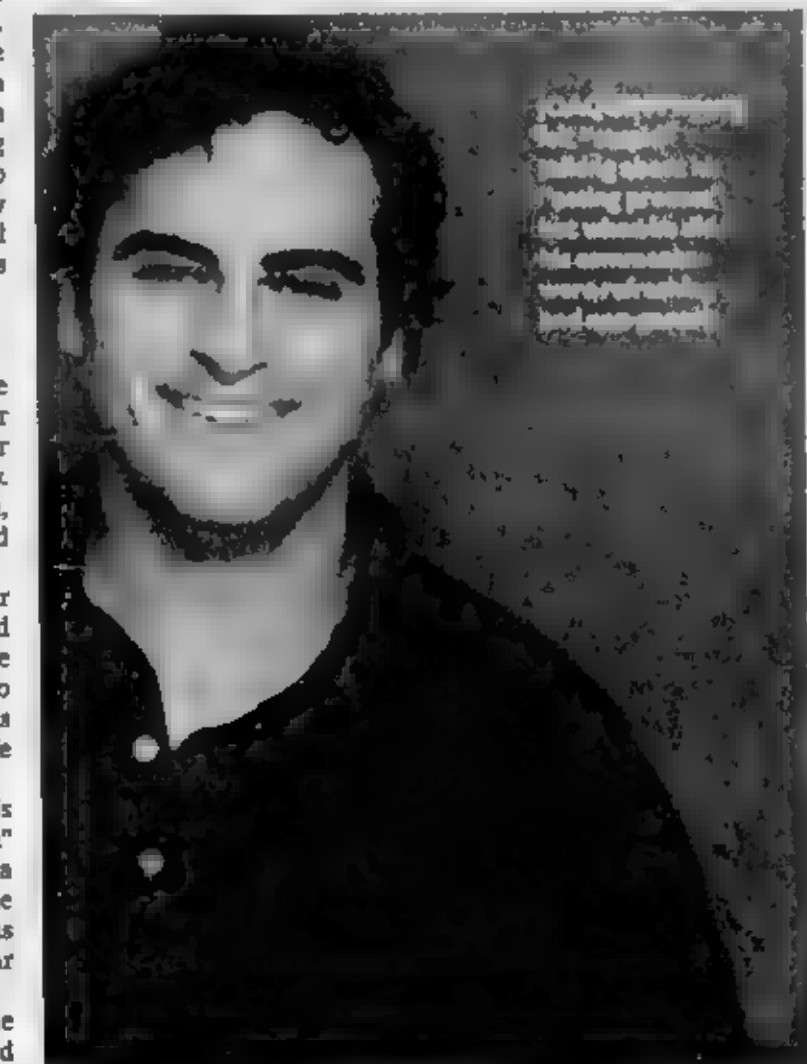
E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com and read his blog, "The Nepales Report," on www.inquirerbloggers.net/nepalesreport.



ANGELINA Jolie, one of Hollywood's most beautiful faces, on her priorities: "I'm a mom first."



JAVIER Bardem, born in Spain and earning international acclaim, spoke in English, but his words came from his passionate Spanish heart and mind.



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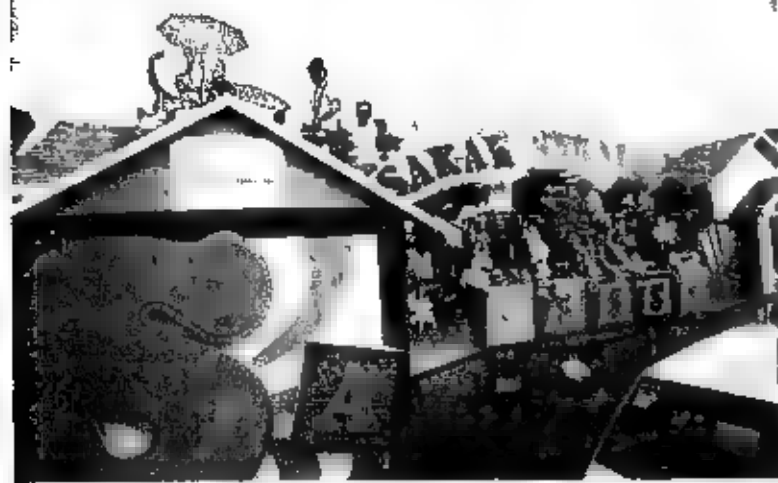
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FANS can't keep their hands off the "Sakal" stuffed toys. EDWIN BACASIAS



FROM left: Actors Alfred Vargas and Paolo Paraiso, producer Ina Alegre and rock icon Joey Smith on the "Banal" float. EDWIN BACASIAS



BEST Float winner "Resiklo" hews closely to the movie's post-apocalyptic, recycled robots theme. RUDY ESPERAS

Float, sink or swim

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

IT WAS HIS FIRST METRO Manila Film Festival parade—and though Rey Bayona was portraying someone who's supposedly beyond entertaining such temporal thoughts, he was visibly excited.

Bayona, nephew of Comedy King Dolphy, was hired to play the Pope for the float of "Banal"—one of nine entries in the annual fest. (The action-drama features a Papal assassination attempt as climax.)

Biggest role



STAR-STRUCK Pinoys gather at the SM Mall of Asia complex, where the annual MMFF parade is kicked off. RUDY ESPERAS

Bayona has done bit parts in his uncle's comedies, like "Bugoy Goes to Congress." But his Pope on Christmas Eve is his biggest role so far.

It was also the first MMFF parade for "Banal" co-star and rock icon Joey "Pepe" Smith, who was just as enthusiastic as Bayona. Smith told INQUIRER Entertainment that the parade capped "a productive year for me."

The other "Banal" actors—Christopher de Leon, Alfred Vargas and Paolo Condit—came in SWAT gear.

Red T-shirt

Vic Sotto on the "Enteng Kabisote 4" float was simply clad in red T-shirt. The "Resiklo"

Highs and lows at the annual festival parade

REY Bayona as a fictional Pope, center, shares the float with a real-life SWAT team. RUDY ESPERAS



cast, led by Sen. Bong Revilla, donned post-apocalyptic gear.

"Resiklo" romped away with the Best Float citation and the P500,000 cash prize.

Imus producer Andrea Bautista-Ynares expressed pride in the "Resiklo" victory, un-mindful of the fact that it cost her film outfit exactly as much as the cash prize.

At least, second placer "Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo," which sported a toy land theme, posted a little profit. Promo head Roxo Liguigan said Star Cinema had spent P250,000 for the float. Cash prize was P300,000.

Some fans couldn't keep their hands off the "Sakal" float—filching the stuffed toys hanging from the sides.

"Bahay Kubo" was earlier earmarked for Best Float. Alas, lead stars Marcel Soriano and Eric Quizon were absent, cost-

ing it valuable points in the judging, recounted Ric Camaligan, parade committee chair.

Camaligan said Soriano and Quizon were in the United States.

Pacman absent

Lily Monteverde, "Bahay" producer, didn't mind sliding down to third place in the float competition. "Our float is simple, but very Filipino. It cost about P250,000." Prize was P100,000.

Another no-show was Manny Pacquiao, star of "Anak ng Kumander." The official excuse from Pacman's camp was that the boxer was training in Cebu.

The grapevine is rife with rumors, however, that he's squabbling with wife Jinkee.

In Pacquiao's stead, impersonator Manny Pagsiw kept co-star Ara Mina company on the "Kumander" float.

Katie Holmes: I haven't changed; I'm really happy

By the INQUIRER and INQUIRER.net Entertainment Staff

AN ASSOCIATED PRESS REPORT has Katie Holmes saying she hasn't changed since marrying Tom Cruise: "With everything that's happened, I still feel the same," she tells Parade magazine in its Dec. 23 issue. "I'm really happy being a mom, being a wife." (Somehow, this intrigues more than it reassures.)

Lost, jailed

LOS ANGELES—Actress Michelle Rodriguez began a 180-day jail term here last weekend for probation violation, the second Hollywood star after Kiefer Sutherland to face a Christmas incarceration. The former "Lost" star checked in to Century Regional Detention Facility in Lynwood, south of downtown LA, under her given name, Mayte. Reuters

Power team

LOS ANGELES—Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freedman, both Oscar winners, both in their 70s and champions of their craft, believe "The Bucket List," their film about two old guys who share a cramped hospital room and the same incurable disease—cancer—could be the most inspiring movie of the season. Reuters

Top of the talk shows

For those who missed the weekend show biz gabfests last weekend. (And why we are moved, if we are moved.)

•Jennylyn Mercado, on rumors she lay down on a street in despair over a lovers' spat with Patrick Garcia:

"Oh my God, ang cheap! Sino ang nagsabi noon? (Actually, we've heard worse.)"

•Marian Rivera, on reports she has a secret boyfriend, a varsity baseball player in a prestigious school:

"Lagi naman akong in love. Masaya... lahat ng parte ng buhay ko." (That's not an answer.)

•Dennis Trillo, on mending ties with former girlfriend Carlene Aguilar this Christmas:

"Pasko naman, eh. Sana wala munang galit. Hindi naman agad-agad mawawala 'yun." (This gives new meaning to "wishy-washy.")

•Ara Mina, on reports sister Cristine Reyes has reconciled with Dennis Trillo: "Bahala na siya. Malaki na siya." (Korek. Di mo nakita 'yan last month?)

•Cristine, asked if she has moved on after the controversy surrounding her alleged relationship with Dennis:

"Anong move on? Wala naman ipagka-move on doon, eh." (Move on, you know—the opposite of stuck.)

•Jewel Mische on Richard Gutierrez:

"I really want to thank Richard. He was my knight in shining armor." (Bakit past tense na?)

•Richard on Jewel: "Si Jewel, she's very sweet so she's not hard to get along with. Limalabas kami." (Humm, mukhang may Valentine movie



HOLLYWOOD A-lister Tom Cruise, right, with wife Katie Holmes, posing for photographers on the red carpet prior to the Bambi media award ceremony in Dusseldorf, western Germany, in November.

sila. Abangan.)

•Direk Kaka Balagtas, on statements from Valerie Concepcion's camp about the controversial kissing scene with Manny Pacquiao in "Anak ng Kumander":

"Bakit kaikangan siyang gamitin na Manny? Sino ba'ng mas sikat sa kanila? Si Manny! Masakit sa akin 'yung sabihin nilang mangagamit kami." (Remember, pag di ka sikat, silence of the lambs ka na lang.)

•Lolit Solis, on her article that resulted in a libel suit filed by Piolo Pascual and Sam Milby against her:

"Sa akin naman talaga, may guilt ako, bakit sinabi ko. Bakit sinabi ko pa 'yung nakata ko. Pero it doesn't mean na babawin ko ang sinabi kong nakata ko sila." (Ah, the difference between regret and remorse.)

•Dina Bonnevie, asked if former hus-

band Vic Sotto could spend Christmas with her:

"Sa bahay ko? Eh di pinatay siya ni Pia (Guanio). Ako naman, meron din naman akong Pasko with my own papa."

•Sen. Bong Revilla, on his friend Sen. Jinggoy Estrada's performance in the Metro Manila Film Festival entry, "Katas ng Saudi":

"Nakita naman natin 'yung... acting naya. Hindi ko naman sinabi na talong-talo na niya ako, but in this movie, pwede siyang manalo ng Best Actor." (Actually.)

•Jolo Revilla, asked if he was hoping to reconcile with estranged girlfriend Grace Adriano:

"May kanya-kanya kami ng buhay. Masaya ako ngayon. Siguro masaya na rin siya ngayon. Basta importante doon, mahal namin 'yung anak namin." (Out of the mouth of babes.)

•Iza Calzado, asked if she would give

up her career for someone she loves:

"That would be a big mistake. Kung may [nangyaring di maganda dahil] sa desisyon na yon, sisisthan mo pa 'yung tan."

Quote of the week

Dranreb Belleza, on coming home after suffering from lymphoma:

"It was important for me to come home... to just embrace [people I wanted to be with], to let them know it's okay, [they should] not be afraid. I'm not."

(Sources: Startalk, The Buzz and Showbiz Central)



LUXURY jeweler Van Cleef and Arpel's is suing model/TV star Heidi Klum for allegedly copying a vintage jewelry design. REUTERS

Suspense, murder, mystery as Hallmark, MGM start new year

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SAMSUNG

HALLMARK CHANNEL KICKS OFF 2008 with must-see premieres of suspense, murder and mystery movies.

In "Absolution" on Jan. 6, 4 p.m., New York City journalist Bettina (Samantha Mathis) is



ABSOLUTION

sent back to her hometown to investigate the story of Paco Ramirez, a comatose man who claims responsibility for a series of medical miracles.

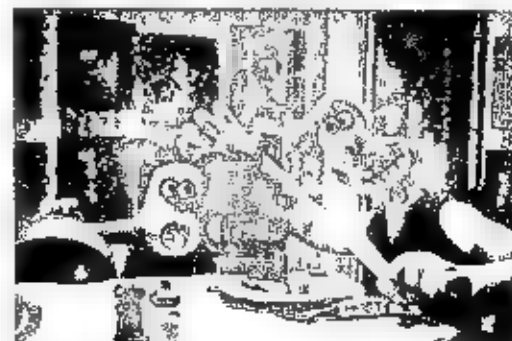
Her lack of faith and stubborn refusal to believe prods her to prove that the miracles are a hoax.

On Jan. 11 at 11 p.m., "Break In" features newlyweds Cameron (Todd Babcock) and Maria (Kelly Carlson) whose honeymoon takes a turn for the worst when three intruders break into the luxury villa, holding the couple in captivity.

On top of that, an approaching hurricane leaves them stranded in the island with their captors.

Animation films

Wallace and his loyal dog race to prevent a



WALLACE & GROMIT

monstrous herbivore from chomping down on the town's vegetable harvest before their annual vegetable competition in HBO's "Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit" at 11 a.m. and 11 p.m. today.

On Dec. 31 at 1 p.m., "Over The Hedge" stars Bruce Willis, Steve Carell and Avril Lavigne who lend their voices to adorable woodland creatures.

When a bunch of forest animals awake from hibernation to find their natural habitat altered and cut off by a tall hedge, a raccoon named RJ hatches a plan to lead the starving animals over the hedge to gather food from their new human neighbors' garbage cans.

'Gorky Park'

In "Gorky Park" on Jan. 19, 9 p.m.,

three mutilated bodies are found in Moscow's Gorky Park. It's up to Russian police officer Arkady Renko to find the maniacal killer.

From the best-selling mystery novel by Martin Cruz Smith, the movie stars William Hurt, Lee Marvin and Joanna Pacula.

Michael Apted directs

Tales of bravery

In "True Heroes" on Jan. 19, 9 p.m.,



TRUE HEROES

credible courage of people who act in life-threatening situations.

Featuring dramatic reenactments and expert analyses, it looks at the situations from both the heroes' and the experts' points of view.

The series, which airs Mondays starting Jan. 7, 11 p.m., features the episodes "Inferno," "Shark Bait," "Gas Station," "Skydiver," "Submerged Car," "Paraglider," "Blind Canoeist," "Heroin House Fire," "Runaway Car," "Bear Attack," "Thin Ice" and "Death Boat."

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LIVING STARS

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'Grey's Anatomy' star weds

LOS ANGELES—KATHERINE HEIGL, EMMY-WINNING STAR of the medical drama "Grey's Anatomy," married her musician boyfriend in Utah last weekend, US Weekly magazine reported on its website. Heigl, 29, and Josh Kelley, 27, tied the knot under a marquee at a resort in Park City, Utah. *Reuters*

NATALIE GRACE LAUCHENGCO

ACCORDING TO PROUD DAD Raymond Lauchengco, "She's now 2 months old. Quite fittingly, Natalie means 'child of Christmas.' We spent Christmas Eve with my wife M.a's *lola* Carmen. There were lots of food and the entire clan gathered to exchange gifts and stories. After dinner, we had hot chocolate and *ensaymada* with ham and *queso de bola*. Natalie is the first great grandchild of her *abuelita* Carmen, so you can imagine how they fussed over her. She was a little cranky, but she willingly wore a Santa cap for her entrance. We spent Christmas Day with my sister Menchu, she makes a mean turkey roast! It's great because my dad, back from the US, is spending the holidays with us. Natalie loves music. This year, 'The First Noel' and 'Angels We Have Heard on High' are her favorites. She also loves Broadway, pop, standards—like Norah Jones' version of 'The Nearness of You' and Hiroshima's 'Thousand Cranes.' Among my songs (from the album 'Full Circle'), 'Head Over Heels' has become her favorite lullaby. I just hope it doesn't have the same effect on other listeners!"

Bayani San Diego Jr.

STAR BABY



FAVORITE NOOKS

VICKY MORALES

OUR TREE WAS GIVEN TO me by my mother-in-law, Yoly Reyno a few Christmases ago. I got the mini-stuffed toys from S&R Pricesmart and Gourd's, but I made the yarn-covered balls from scratch—an idea I got from a Gap store I had visited. I bought the Styrofoam balls in three different sizes and the yarn in assorted colors from National Bookstore. I spun yarn around each ball and accented them with checkered ribbons. They turned out to be very pretty. This year, I wanted a kiddie tree because I'm expecting twin boys in a couple of months. Since "Saksi" (the GMA 7 late-night newscast that she anchors) goes on live even during the holidays, I rush to the studio between family gatherings. This Christmas is special to me and my husband King (with her at right) because, with the arrival of the twins, I feel like we'll be celebrating another Christmas very soon. Both our families have been praying for this. It's like our prayers have been answered—twice over.

Bayani San Diego Jr.

PHOTO BY KING REYNO



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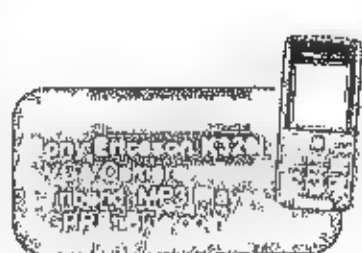
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HILARY Swank at the premiere of "PS I Love You" in Dublin, Dec. 19. AFP



WILL Smith at the London premiere of his latest film, "I am Legend," Dec. 19. AFP

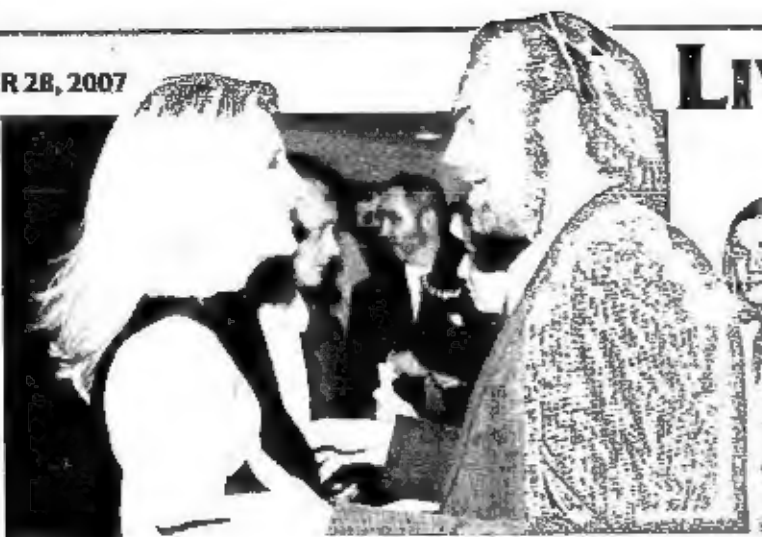


JACK Nicholson at the "The Bucket List" Hollywood premiere, Dec. 16. AFP

**STARS
FOR
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ACTORS Jennifer Love Hewitt and Ross McCall, top, and Michael Rapaport and his son, above, serve Christmas meals to the homeless at the LA Mission in downtown Los Angeles, California. AFP



AUSTRALIAN actors Cate Blanchett, left, and Hugo Weaving at the premiere of "Blackbird," Dec. 20, at the Sydney Theatre Company. It was Blanchett's directorial debut for a full-length production. REUTERS

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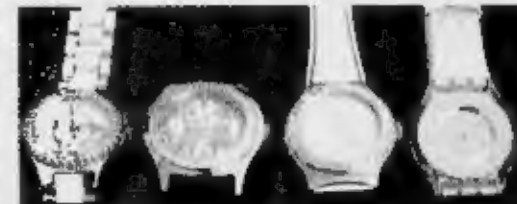
Bayani San Diego Jr.



OUT OF THE CLOSET



SHE LIKES dresses designed by Veejay Floresca and Njork.



SHE BECAME conscious of time only when she began singing professionally, she says.

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Jim Guiao Ponzalan

RACHELLE ANN GO'S PASIG City home may not be the best place to nurse her broken heart. The two-story house is filled with reminders of her ex-boyfriend Christian Bautista.

Rachelle Ann and Christian recently made public the end of their yearlong relationship. The singers said the split-up was a "mutual" decision, and denied that a "third-party" was involved.

When Living Stars visited Rachelle Ann, just days before the announcement, the bubbly singer gamely showed us some of her favorite things, especially those given by Christian.

There was no indication, whatsoever, of the sad news about to come.

From over a hundred bags, Rachel Ann plucked a piece from Burberry that a group of US-based fans gave her last April. "This is special to me," she explained, "because they also gifted Christian with matching Burberry belt and tie."

From her perfume collection, she brought out a bottle of Elizabeth Arden

Singer Rachelle Ann Go's home is filled with reminders of her ex-boyfriend, Christian Bautista.



THE SINGER has been collecting drumsticks since 2004.

Green Tea. "This is from Christian," she said. "I've finished four bottles. I love its fresh scent."

For her birthday last August, Rachelle Ann got a Louis Vuitton bag, also from Christian. "This is the latest addition to my collection. Christian bought it in Milan. I like its style ... and I can put a lot of stuff in it," she said.

SHE HAD to train herself to wear high-heels, a job requirement.

JEWELRY

Christian gave me a pair of two-toned earrings when he came back from a trip in Indonesia. He also gave me a necklace to go with it.

This Swarovski studded bangle is also from Christian. I asked him to buy accessories for my cell phone and he gave me this. I liked it so much, that I decided not to make a cell phone ornament out of it anymore.

I got these three-piece Louis Vuitton earrings from Hong Kong. You can mix and match the individual pieces. It has a heart, a flower and a star.

This diamond crucifix is the first pendant I ever bought from my earnings. The "R" pendant was from my manager, Veronique del Rosario, her gift for my 18th birthday.

For my birthday this year, I bought myself a set of diamond necklace, earrings and gold ring.

SCENTS

I have all sorts of perfumes—most of them gifts from people close to me. Aside from Elizabeth Arden's Green Tea, I also like the fresh scent of Light Blue by Dolce and Gabbana.

The scent of Florentina is really strong. With just a spray, people can smell you from afar. It's something I wear during



THE SET of two-toned earrings and necklace was a gift from ex-boyfriend Christian. The diamond pieces are her birthday gifts to herself.

parties. It lasts for hours.

BAGS

I think I have more than a hundred bags in the storage. I don't get to use all of them. This Elvis bag was a gift from Kuya Carlo (Orosa, singer, and Christian's talent manager). We bought this in the United States when we went there for a show. This costs almost \$200 in the mall, but the stalls in Beverly Hills sell it for just \$80. Luckily, one of the salesladies in Beverly Hills is Pinay, so we even got a 50 percent discount.

I hardly use my Prada and Coach bags because they're small. They're just big enough for my cell phone and wallet. These are gifts from friends, too.



SHE HAS "all sorts of perfumes," Rachelle Ann says.

I personally wouldn't spend too much on branded bags. But the advantage of owning expensive ones is that they're really sturdy. You can use them for a long time.

This make-up bag from Mac was also a gift. I don't bring it on long trips because it's really heavy. I use my Juicy Couture make-up bag because it's light and compact.

SHOES

My latest is this Vince Camuto pair that I bought in Hong Kong. Futuristic and look n'ya. It's very different from the pairs you see here.

I like pairs that are unique. But comfort is still my priority. If they're cute but pinch my feet, I don't buy it.

From my recent trip to Canada, I bought this pair of beaded heels. I got lots of rave reviews for this.

I own pumps in red, bronze and black. They are perfect for shows that require quick changes.

ACCESSORIES

I did not like wearing watches before. It was only when I began singing professionally that I became conscious of time. It's important to always be punctual. Skechers provide most of my watches. Christian also gave me a couple of pieces. From those that he gave me, I like the one with fancy straps.

GOWNS, DRESSES

The gold terno I wore for a competition in Kazakhstan in 2005 was by Nono Palmas. *Kabisado na n'ya ang taste ko*. One of the pieces he made for me for my debut was a pink gown with Swarovski beads and hand-painted butterfly design. I also like vintage dresses from Njork and creations by Veejay Floresca—very detailed.

JEANS

I enjoy wearing jeans more than dresses. I have a total of 60 pairs! My favorite is the one I bought in Dubai a long time ago. It's super rugged and stretchable.



BOOKS

JM REYES of 'Zaido'

I LOVE READING "THE Story of Jonah," written by Alice Joyce Davidson and illustrated by Victoria Marshall. It's a story from the Bible and I like it because I pick up a lot of lessons—for example, trusting in God and being prayerful. I also love "500 Fantastic Facts: A Treasury of Colorful and Amazing Facts" and "Wonders of the World." I learn a lot of interesting things from these trivia books. I also enjoy joke books like "Mga Kuwentong Kuwela" and "Mga Pakuwela ng Aking Lahi" by Lino Pregonal Jr. I always bring "My Dictionary of Everyday Words" everywhere I go. I share these books with my sister Mary Grace.

Bayani San Diego Jr.



MARK BAUTISTA

OUR FISH HAS A NAME WE ALL know. It's a goldfish. I bought it for \$500. In a pet store. Long time ago, three years ago. It was the little goldfish that we put in the aquarium with it. I guess it's not hungry now because it's ignoring the guppies. My work designer and I plan to build a bigger aquarium in the foyer for it. This one under the same is just temporary.

Bayani San Diego Jr.